

KEMALISM MEETS THE COPENHAGEN CRITERIA:  
THE EMERGENCE OF NEO-KEMALISM

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*To my parents*

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **KEMALISM MEETS THE COPENHAGEN CRITERIA: THE EMERGENCE OF NEO-KEMALISM**

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Turkey's long-drawn-out journey came to another turning point after getting 3 October 2005 as a date for the launch of accession talks with the European Union. This decision made by the Union on 17 December 2004 was an upshot of huge steps taken by subsequent Turkish governments in terms of transforming its democracy so as to comply with the Copenhagen criteria. This wave of democratization inevitably has raised questions about the fate of Kemalism, which has been largely penetrated by these reforms. When these reforms are coupled with some allegations both from the EU and from within Turkey as being a barrier to Turkey's EU membership, it became inevitable to put Kemalism and its fate into interrogation. This thesis aims to answer the question of how and why prevalent interpretation of Kemalism is being strained by the EU conditionality that permeates fundamentals of Kemalism.

Keywords: Kemalism, Turkey and the European Union, the Copenhagen Criteria.

## ÖZET

KEMALİZM KOPENHAG KRİTERLERİYLE BULUŞUYOR:

NEO-KEMALİZMİN DOĞUŞU

Günay, Defne

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Avrupa Birliği'nin 3 Ekim 2005'te Türkiye'yle müzakerelere başlama kararı almasıyla bu uzun yolculukta önemli bir dönüm noktasına gelinmiş oldu. Birlik tarafından 17 Aralık 2004'te alınan bu karar Türk hükümetlerinin Kopenhag Kriterlerine uyum amacıyla demokratikleşme adına art arda yaptıkları reformların bir sonucudur. Kuşkusuz bu demokratikleşme dalgası, bu reformlardan büyük ölçüde etkilenen Kemalizmin geleceği ile ilgili sorular oluşturacaktı. Bu reformların hem Avrupa Birliği hem Türkiye içinden Kemalizmin Türkiye'nin Avrupa Birliği Üyeliği'ne engel teşkil ettiğine dair ithamlarla birleşmesiyle; Kemalizmi ve onun geleceğini incelemek kaçınılmaz hale gelmiştir. Bu tez, Kemalizmin mevcut yorumunun temel noktalarına temas eden Avrupa Birliği şartlılığı dolayısıyla neden ve nasıl zorlandığı sorusuna bir cevap aramaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kemalizm, Avrupa Birliği- Türkiye ilişkileri, Kopenhag Kriterleri.

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## INTRODUCTION

Turkey has its eyes set on the European Union (EU)<sup>1</sup> membership since the conclusion of Ankara Agreement, which is the association agreement signed between the European Economic Community and Turkey in 1963. Since then Turkey-EU relations has occupied a privileged position in Turkey's foreign policy. Despite all ups and downs in this thorny road, Turkey has always insisted on the EU membership. Turkey's long-drawn-out journey came to a turning point after getting 3 October 2005 as a date for the launch of accession talks with the EU. This decision made by the Union on 17 December 2004 was an upshot of huge steps taken by subsequent Turkish governments in terms of transforming its democracy so as to comply with the so-called Copenhagen criteria, which are stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities; the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union; and the ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union. Turkish Grand National Assembly amended more than one-fifth of the articles of the 1982 Constitution since 1999 and passed seven harmonization packages till now that introduced new provisions in areas like the legal composition and functioning of the National Security Council (NSC), abolished the death penalty, improved individual cultural rights, freedom of expression, right to association and peaceful assembly.

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<sup>1</sup> I will utilize "the EU" to refer to the entire history of the post-war European integration even though the endeavor had been named as the European Economic Community (EEC) between 1957 and 1992, and the European Community from 1992 onwards.

This wave of democratization inevitably has raised questions about the fate of Turkey's founding ideology that is commonly referred to as Kemalism<sup>2</sup>, which has been presumably largely penetrated by these reforms. When these reforms are coupled with some allegations from the EU as being a barrier to Turkey's EU membership with its "fear of the undermining of the integrity of the Turkish state and an emphasis on the homogeneity of Turkish culture, an important role for the army, and a very rigid attitude to religion"<sup>3</sup>, it became inevitable to put Kemalism and its fate into interrogation.

Although Kemalism was originally designed as a rather flexible outlook, the process of transforming it into an ideology started after the 1950s. Particularly the 1980 coup took huge steps in transforming Kemalism into an ideology. The 1982 Constitution frequently made mention of Kemalism as a guiding ideology by taking its six principles as tantamount to an ideology that is closed to revision. This specific interpretation of Kemalism (hereafter the orthodox interpretation<sup>4</sup>) prevailed in the policies and the practices of the post-1980 governments. However, the EU conditionality that gained strength after Turkey's recognition as a candidate country in the 1999 Helsinki Summit heavily strained this orthodox interpretation by

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<sup>2</sup> In general terms Kemalism can be defined as Turkey's founding ideology that is built upon six principles—the so-called six arrows, which are republicanism, nationalism, populism, *etatism*, secularism, and revolutionism. These principles are usually referred to as the founding or state ideology of Turkey. See Heinz Kramer, *A Changing Turkey: The Challenge to Europe and the United States* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2000), 1; Haldun Gülalp, "Turkey Questions of National Identity," in *New Xenophobia in Europe* ed. Bernd Baumgartl and Adrian Favell (London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1995), 358; Gülistan Gürbey, "The Development of the Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey since the 1980s," in *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990s*, ed. Robert Olson (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 10; and İhsan D. Dağı, "Democratic Transition in Turkey, 1980-83: The Impact of European Diplomacy," in *Turkey: Identity, Democracy, Politics*, ed. Sylvia Kedourie (London: Frank Cass, 1996), 139.

<sup>3</sup> Murat Belge, "Oostlander's Notorious Turkey Report", [www.turkishpress.com](http://www.turkishpress.com), retrieved on 10 June 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Orthodoxy is the opinion which adheres as closely as possible to a given set of beliefs. Roger Scruton, *A Dictionary of Political Thought* (London: Macmillan, 1996), 397. Built on this definition, orthodox Kemalism refers to the prevalent, Kemalist 'ideology' that has largely taken its ideological form after the 1980 military coup. Members of this group regard Kemalism as a dogma and view Turkey's EU membership prospect through this ideological lense. Their views will be discussed in detail in Chapter IV.

demanding key policy changes in areas such as the Kurdish question, the Alevi question, the role of the military. These demands as well as the idea of limiting national sovereignty and sharing competences with the Union institutions in case of Turkey's membership to the Union seriously clashed with the orthodox interpretation of Kemalism. There emerged the prospect of the EU membership whereas the orthodox Kemalists have been highly sceptical of relinquishing national sovereignty in key policy making areas. The EU conditionality pushed Turkey to grant cultural rights to its Kurdish originated people and to eliminate the double standard in the treatment of the Alevis and other religious minorities, whereas the orthodox Kemalists have been in favour of restricting all reflections of Kurdish and Alevi identity. The EU urged Turkey to ensure civilian control of the military, whereas the orthodox Kemalists believe that the TAF have to oversee Turkey's political development.

This thesis aims to answer the question as to how and why this orthodox interpretation of Kemalism is being strained by the EU conditionality that permeates fundamentals of their interpretation of Kemalism. This thesis argues that although the orthodox Kemalist interpretation did not aim to and could not accommodate itself with the requirements of the EU membership, a neo-Kemalist group started to flourish, which could answer the requirements of the EU as well as the changing juncture by reinterpreting Kemalism and restoring it in its original form that was an outlook. This group by and large argues that Kemalism cannot be a stagnant ideology that is not open to change, since its author was a pragmatist and rational leader. With regard to the Kurdish and the Alevi question, they have a more liberal position and they argue that pragmatism of Atatürk can be used for legitimizing greater freedom to use Kurdish. They also regard the compulsory religious courses as a threat to

laicism and this way they share the EU's concerns regarding this issue. Members of the neo-Kemalist group commonly reject the dominance of the military in Turkish politics and hold that the Turkish society has matured over time. With regard to the final problematic issue, the issue of sharing sovereignty with the EU institutions, they point that Atatürk himself had accepted limitations on Turkey's sovereignty for the sake of the country's welfare and peace, and that this reasoning of Atatürk should be followed today.

Exploring the fundamentals of the orthodox interpretation of Kemalism necessitates a historical approach since it evolved in the course of time. After presenting in Chapter I an overview of how EU conditionality has been penetrating into the orthodox interpretation of Kemalism especially after the 1999 Helsinki Summit that elevated Turkey's status to candidacy, the next chapter gives an account of Atatürk's long-term goals and tactics that are embedded in the 'six arrows'. This chapter aims to reveal Atatürk's basic philosophy concerning the 'six arrows'. After revealing the ideals and the principles that Atatürk prioritized, in Chapter III, the historical evolution of the problematic aspects of the EU conditionality, namely the Kurdish question, the Alevi question, and the role of the military in Turkish politics are analyzed. These issues are analyzed in two frameworks of time- the early years of the Republic and aftermath of the 1980 military coup- for the purposes of this thesis since these two distinctive periods are indicative of Kemalism and the orthodox version of Kemalism, respectively. This analysis is made in this manner so as to reveal the rupture from Atatürk's ideals and practices after the 1980 military *coup d'état* in those issues. Chapter III also includes another problematic area, the limitations on sovereignty, which is also analyzed in a historical perspective. Although a significant rupture with the 1980 military coup from previous practices

cannot be observed in this particular issue, another major characteristic that the orthodox Kemalists have in common is their negative position regarding the EU membership and limitations on sovereignty. Thus this issue is also handled in a way that reveals the practices before emergence of the prospect of the EU membership.

Building upon this historical analysis, Chapter IV explains the views of the orthodox and neo-Kemalists over these problematic issues. In this chapter, it is argued that the prospect of the EU membership was intensified after the Helsinki decision to recognize Turkey as a candidate country, and this motive led to a stiff wave of reform packages. Thus, a strong pressure for a revision of the orthodox interpretation of Kemalism emerged. I present divergent views of orthodox and neo-Kemalists in order to show how this neo-Kemalist group accommodates itself to the EU conditionality and to the prospect of the EU membership, as well as how the orthodox Kemalists remain incompatible with the idea of the EU membership.

Finally I conclude that the emergence or a strengthening of a vocal neo-Kemalist group is on its way that synthesizes the progressive essence of Kemalism and the democratic spirit of the Copenhagen political criteria so as to answer the EU conditionality.

## **CHAPTER I**

### **EU CONDITIONALITY AND ITS IMPACT ON KEMALISM**

#### **1.1 Historical Evolution of Turkey-EU Relations**

Turkey's first relations with the EU started by the Menderes government's application to be an associate member of the EEC in 1959, right after the Greek application in the same year. The association agreement (Ankara Agreement) was signed on 12 September 1963. The agreement envisaged completion of a customs union between Turkey and the EU within three stages and Article 28 clearly stated that full membership could be negotiated after Turkey fulfills all of its contractual commitments. Technical details of the customs union were decided in an Additional Protocol that was signed on 23 November 1970.<sup>5</sup>

Turkey's application for full membership came in 1987 while Turkey was pursuing a more liberal, outward oriented economic policy and Turkish industry was developing rapidly with the potential of competition with European industries. But the Commission's response at that time was negative. The Commission concluded that "it would not be useful to open accession negotiations with Turkey straight away" and drew attention to the dispute between Greece and Turkey and "the

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<sup>5</sup> The Additional Protocol came into force on 1 January 1973. the three stages that were envisaged by the Additional Protocol were the preparatory, transitional and the final stage. The Additional Protocol finalized the first stage and regulated the passage to the transitional stage. In 1 January 1996 the final stage came into force and the Customs Union between the EC and Turkey was concluded.

situation in Cyprus."<sup>6</sup> The Commission also pointed that the Community could not admit new members before completing its single market, and also that Turkey needed to improve itself economically, socially and politically before its accession to the EU. Although the response of the Commission was negative; this application for full membership revived Turkey-EC relations after a period of cool down and suspension due to the 1980 military coup in Turkey and EC's blocking of the 4<sup>th</sup> Financial Protocol. The Customs union agreement came about after this revival in relations.

On 31 December 1995 Turkey became the only state to complete customs union with the EU, without being a full member. Following the Kardak crisis of January 1996, relations between Turkey and Greece, and inevitably with the European Union were strained. Tense relations were reflected in the Agenda 2000, adopted on 15 July 1997, which urges Turkey to "give a firm commitment to resolve a number of problems in the region and contribute actively to a just and lasting settlement of the Cypriot question".<sup>7</sup>

1997 Luxembourg European Council displayed very well this tension and the EU's overall reluctance towards Turkey's membership. EU members convened in Luxembourg summit to discuss the enlargement issue as the main item. This summit was important for Turkey because the Turkish government was waiting for a positive response to its candidacy question. However, the summit was a great disappointment for Turkey since the EU did not include Turkey in the accession strategy, while setting a timetable for other applicant countries.<sup>8</sup> The Council

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<sup>6</sup> Commission Opinion on Turkey's Request for Accession to the Community, Part II. Par.9 and Part III. Par.10.

<sup>7</sup> 1998 Regular Report, part b, Relations between the European Union and Turkey, par.14.

<sup>8</sup> The applicant countries that were given a timetable were Cyprus, Hungary, Poland, Estonia, the Czech Republic and Slovenia. It was also stated in the Luxembourg Presidency Conclusions, par. 28

concluded that Turkey was eligible for membership but prior to its accession to the Union it had to realize “pursuit of the political and economic reforms on which it has embarked, including the alignment of human rights standards and practices on those in force in the European Union; respect for and protection of minorities.”<sup>9</sup> After this disappointment caused by the Luxembourg, Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz declared that Turkey would not have political dialogue with the EU anymore. Official declaration also proposed the continuation of relations on the basis of existing agreements, namely the Association Agreement and the Customs Union Agreement. After this stake, the revolutionary step in Turkey-EU relations came with the 1999 Helsinki Summit, which granted Turkey the candidacy status.

## **1.2 The EU Challenges Kemalism**

Since the Cardiff summit in June 1998, the Union has been preparing yearly Progress Reports<sup>10</sup> and Accession Partnership documents<sup>11</sup> since the Helsinki Summit in December 1999. These documents are prepared in line with the Copenhagen criteria that constitute the basis of accession criteria. Copenhagen criteria impose on candidate countries the stability of institutions guaranteeing

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that the preparation of negotiations with Romania, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania and Bulgaria would be speeded up.

<sup>9</sup> Luxembourg Presidency Conclusions, 13 December 1997, part d. Review Procedure, par. 35.

<sup>10</sup> The Regular progress reports contain a detailed analysis of the progress made by the candidate countries. The progress reports are prepared every year by the European Commission for each candidate country. The purpose is to identify issues, which will be discussed in detail in the negotiations. The European Parliament gives its view on the progress reports, and they are also adopted by the European Council.

<sup>11</sup> The Accession Partnership documents concluded by the Council with the applicant countries are prepared to assist the candidate country government in its efforts to comply with the Copenhagen criteria and they outline the priorities for implementing the Community *acquis*. The accession partnerships are adjusted over time by the Commission. In response to the Accession Partnership documents, candidate countries prepare their own National Program for the Adoption of the Acquis (NPAA), which contains the plans of that country with regards to its integration to the EU. It explains in a timetable, how it plans to transpose the conditions outlined in the Accession Partnership documents and gives a rough evaluation of its financial and human resources that it needs for realizing those conditions. NPAAs can be revised in time like the Accession Partnerships.



democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities; the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union; the ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union. Since the recognition of its candidacy, Turkey has been striving to comply with the Copenhagen criteria that were set by the EU. Some elements of Accession Partnership documents and Progress Reports clash with the orthodox interpretation of Kemalism that has been prevailing since the 1980s, especially on the Kurdish question, the Alevi question, the role of the military in Turkish politics and accepting limitations on national sovereignty particularly in terms of policy making.

Since the 1998 Regular Report by the Commission on Turkey, the EU has been demanding from Turkey full respect to grant cultural rights to Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin, recognize the existence of an Alevi identity, downgrading the role of the military in Turkish politics so as to align it with the EU practices. The Commission repeatedly calls Turkey to find a solution that would include “recognition of certain forms of Kurdish cultural identity and greater tolerance of the ways of expressing that identity, provided it does not advocate separatism or terrorism.”<sup>12</sup> With regard to the Alevi problem, the Commission reiterates that there exists a double standard in treatment between those religious minorities recognized by the Lausanne Treaty and other religious minorities, including the Alevi community in Turkey concerning the compulsory religious instruction in schools, which does not recognize the Alevi identity, as well as the availability of financial

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<sup>12</sup> 1999 Regular Report by the Commission on Turkey’s Progress Towards Accession, 1.2. Human Rights and the Protection of Minorities, Minority Rights and Protection of Minorities, par.1

support only for the building of Sunni mosques and religious foundations.<sup>13</sup> The Commission reiterates that “the lack of civilian control of the army gives cause for concern that is reflected by the major role played by the army in political life through the National Security Council”<sup>14</sup> in almost every Progress Report since 1998, as well as the Accession Partnership documents of 2000 and 2003.

Although Accession Partnership documents and Progress Reports constitute the official conditions and demands of the Union, there exist further documents or decisions of other EU institutions, which seriously reveal the clash between EU membership and prevalent interpretation of Kemalism, in other words, orthodox Kemalism. The most famous one is a report prepared by a European parliamentarian, Arie Oostlander. Oostlander report regards “underlying philosophy of the Turkish state”<sup>15</sup> as follows:

The underlying philosophy of the Turkish state comprises elements such as nationalism, an important role for the army, and a rigid attitude to religion, which are hard to reconcile with the founding values of the European Union, and has to be adapted in order to enable a less rigid and more open-minded cultural and regional diversity as well as a modern and tolerant concept of the nation State.<sup>16</sup>

Other than the Oostlander report there exist many other resolutions adopted by the European Parliament in similar fields such as the Economic and Social Committee’s report, which suggests that the unity of the Turkish state should be compatible with the rights of the Kurds to use and teach their language<sup>17</sup> and the European Parliament resolution that calls PKK and Turkish government “to find a

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<sup>13</sup> 2000 Regular Report by the Commission on Turkey’s Progress towards Accession, 1.2. Human Rights and the Protection of Minorities, Civil and Political Rights, par.15.

<sup>14</sup> 1998 Regular Report, 1.4. General Evaluation, par.1.

<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that in previous drafts of the Oostlander report, the word “Kemalism” was explicitly used instead of the term “underlying philosophy of the Turkish state.” *Turkish Daily News*, 14 May 2003.

<sup>16</sup> Arie Oostlander, *Report on Turkey’s Application for Membership of the European Union* (COM(2002) 700-C5-0104/2003-2000/2014(COS)).

<sup>17</sup> Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities, *Opinion, Relations Between the European Union and Turkey*, CES 1314/93, Brussels, 22 December 1993.

non-violent and political solution to the Kurdish issue respecting territorial integrity and unity of Turkey, while acknowledging the right of Turkish citizens to strive for a form of cultural autonomy within Turkey by peaceful means”<sup>18</sup> are two of such reports and resolutions that are directly linked to the Kemalist principles.

In response to the Accession Partnership document the Turkish government prepared its NPAA in 2000 and revised it in 2003. Accession Partnership document of 2000 assured that all obstacles on broadcasting in languages other than Turkish will be removed and civilian rule over the judiciary- including the State Security Courts will be ensured in the short term; and guaranteed to align the NSC with European standards and consolidate every individual’s cultural rights regardless of ethnic origin in the mid-term. Its revised version by and large reiterates the mid-term guarantees as its short-term priorities. However the outstanding step taken by Turkish authorities was to adopt subsequent reform packages that introduced changes in almost every area of Turkish politics. The Turkish governments started designing and adopting reform packages to comply with the demands of the Union. In October 2001, a constitutional reform was introduced that strengthened the guarantees in the field of fundamental freedoms and restricting the grounds for death penalty. Constitutional amendments of October 2001 also made some changes in the legal framework of the NSC, by increasing the number of civilians in the NSC, removing the representative of the NSC in the Supervision Board of Cinema, Video and Music [Kültür Bakanlığı Sinema, Video ve Müzik Eserleri Denetleme Kurulu], and by abolishing the extended executive and supervisory powers, such as the Secretary General’s following-up the implementation of any recommendation made by the NSC. Another amendment provides that the post of Secretary General will no longer

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<sup>18</sup> European Parliament, *Resolution on the Situation in Turkey and the offer of a ceasefire made by the PKK* (B4-0060, 0076, 0086 and 0089/96), 18 January 1996.

be reserved exclusively for a military person. Among seven harmonization packages that were adopted between February 2002 and August 2003, the reform package of August 2002 was a landmark event. This reform package abolished the death penalty, lifted legal restrictions on individual cultural rights, made retrial possible in the light of the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights, reinforced legal guarantees on freedoms of expression and press, eased restrictions on the right to association and peaceful assembly, ensured the right to property of community foundations belonging to the minorities in Turkey.

It is important to note that the pace of reforms dramatically increased after 1999 Helsinki decision to grant Turkey candidacy status. This is due to the fact that recognition as a candidate country increased the prospect of full membership in the eyes of Turkish people and politicians. As Öniş puts,

Following the Helsinki decision, the incentives to undertake reform have increased considerably. The pressures to conform to EU norms, as well as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), have created major avenues for change in the recent Turkish context in both the economic and the political realms.<sup>19</sup>

This “appropriate mix of incentives” in Öniş’s words led Turkey into a democratization drive and at the same time into an atmosphere of debate, especially concerning the essence of Kemalism and its future. These debates were reflected in official documents as well. A report prepared by the Prime Ministry High Council for the Coordination of Human Rights Issues [Başbakanlık İnsan Hakları Koordinatör Üst Kurulu] in 2000, which included ground breaking proposals such as abolishing the ban on use of languages other than Turkish in expression of thoughts

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<sup>19</sup> Ziya Öniş, “Domestic Politics, International Norms and Challenges to the State: Turkey-EU Relations in the Post-Helsinki Era,” in *Turkey and the European Union*, ed. Ali Çarkoğlu and Barry Rubin (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 9.

led to the dismissal of its architect Gürsel Demirok.<sup>20</sup> Another report prepared by the Prime Ministry Human Rights Advisory Board [Başbakanlık İnsan Hakları Danışma Kurulu] in 18 October 2004 was fiercely debated and highly criticized. The report suggested updating the minority interpretations based on Lausanne Treaty, overcoming the ‘Sevres syndrome’ that turned out to be sort of a paranoia, viewing EU membership as continuation of Kemalist ideal of civilizationism, and argued that even the most innocent identity claims had been perceived as attempts to divide Turkey.<sup>21</sup> This report was so provocative that two non-governmental organizations, the Rule of Law Association [Hukukun Egemenliği Derneği] and the Societal Thought Association [Toplumsal Düşünce Derneği], brought the authors of the report before the court. One report caused its author’s dismissal, and the other ended up with a law suit. These events are illustrative to show how EU candidacy led to an increase in the pace of reforms, and aggravated the debates on Kemalism and its essentials.

Aside of the explicit demands and conditions voiced by the EU, there is also another aspect of the EU conditionality that raises questions within some circles in Turkey: the issue of sovereignty limitation that is embedded in the philosophy of the EU integration.

The EU, as a “post-modern polity”<sup>22</sup> seriously challenges the classical conception of sovereign state in which the governments has an absolute right to control their own territory and independence of all other states in the international arena. Its multi-level governance assigns certain tasks to the supranational and sub national levels, as well as to the nation states. This extension of sovereign rights both

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<sup>20</sup> “MGK’nın dediği oldu,” *Radikal* (Turkish Daily), 23 June 2000.

<sup>21</sup> “Devlete ‘Azınlığa Direnme’ Raporu,” *Sabah* (Turkish Daily), 18 October 2004.

<sup>22</sup> James Caporaso, “The European Union and forms of state: Westphalian, regulatory or post-modern?” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 34 (1996), 30.

to the supranational institutions and sub national institutions puts limitations on the nation state's sovereignty in policy-making. 70 percent of public works spending in Europe is decided by the local governments, whereas the single market is managed by the Commission that is a supranational institution. The European Central Bank governs the monetary policies, whereas after every deepening step the scope of the qualified majority voting<sup>23</sup> in decision making is increased. This sort of a limitation of sovereignty also strains Turkey since it has a deep rooted sovereign state tradition.

It is obvious that the norms common to the EU members, as well as the EU's demands from Turkey touches upon some basic principles of Kemalism and cause severe debates throughout the academia, politics and the society as a whole. Before discussing the different interpretations of Kemalism, it is necessary to identify what Kemalism really means. Without understanding Atatürk's heritage, it is impossible to assess the validity of its interpretations. The next chapter aims at answering questions of whether Kemalism is a closed ideology that sets its eye to imprison its adherents, or it is a flexible outlook that was frozen in the course of time.

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<sup>23</sup> A qualified majority is the number of votes required in the Council for a decision to be adopted when certain issues are debated. After 1 November 2004, following enlargement of the Union, the QM went up to 232 votes out of a total of 321, representing a majority of the Member States. The European Constitution currently being ratified provides for 45 new QMV situations.

## CHAPTER II

### DEFINING KEMALISM

#### 2.1      **Atatürk's Style of Governance**

Atatürk's governance during the years of national liberation and in the early years of the Republic can be categorized into two: his long-term goals and the tactics he utilized to achieve those long-term goals. These two categories need to be distinguished and further elaborated.

##### *2.1.1    Atatürk's long-term targets*

A common fallacy among Turkish politicians and students of Turkish politics is to overemphasize the means Atatürk had utilized to achieve his goals, instead of his aims. As Heper puts, Atatürkist state “is not the state that *existed* during Atatürk's life time, but the state as it was *espoused* by him”<sup>24</sup>. Thus, Atatürk's political thoughts and his expressed goals need further elaboration for the purposes of this thesis.

Atatürk and his associates tried to build a secular republic out of the ashes of a theocratic monarchy that had left behind an uneducated *ummah*, while fighting a war of national liberation at the same time. During this struggle Atatürk had the chance to analyze the reasons behind the demise of the Ottoman Empire and he

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<sup>24</sup> Metin Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey* (Walkington: The Eothen Press, 1985), 48.

started to formulate his own system of political thought. He saw the source of decline as personal rule of Sultans, and peoples' alienation from discussing the fate of their country due to long years of Sultanate. In the light of these observations he concluded that the people should be awakened from above. Turkish society had its own "genuine feelings and desires", and these feelings and aspirations existed regardless of whether or not the people identified them.<sup>25</sup> Thus, the Turkish reformers namely the Kemalist cadres were responsible from identifying these "genuine or real feelings" of the people and directing the people in accordance with these orientations since Turkish peoples' collective conscience had not reached a certain level. This outlook towards politics is an upshot of Atatürk's positivist orientation. "Positivists are committed to the belief that there is a knowable world 'out there' that has a structure and form that can be grasped by the competent investigator who is value-neutral and committed to nothing but the search for truth."<sup>26</sup> In Turkish case this view found its reflection in modernization led by state elites from above, through different reforms that were believed to guide people to the level of contemporary civilization.

### ***2.1.2 Atatürk's Tactics***

Kemalist principles, namely the "Six Arrows" constitute the means believed to lead people to the level of contemporary civilizations, which is the genuine feeling of the people. Four of the Six Arrows-- republicanism, laicism, nationalism,

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<sup>25</sup> Heper, *The State*, 50.

<sup>26</sup> David Ashley and David Michael Orenstein, *Sociological Theory: Classical Statements* (Boston : Allyn and Bacon, 1990), 55.



populism-- were embraced as the Republican People's Party's (RPP)<sup>27</sup> basic principles in 1927 and other two principles-- *etatism* and reformism-- were adopted by the RPP in the third congress of the Party in 1931, and were incorporated into the Constitution in 1937. A brief overview of these Six Arrows will be illuminating at this point.

### 2.1.2.1 Republicanism

Atatürk had already announced his plan to establish a republic in a speech he gave on 13 August 1923. He said “The new Turkish state is a people's state; it is the state of the people.”<sup>28</sup> This objective was realized by abolishing the Sultanate on 1 November 1922; and the Turkish Republic was proclaimed on 29 October 1923.

Republicanism basically means rendering sovereign the national will, instead of personal will as it was in the Ottoman Empire. The new state designed its policies in line with the genuine feelings of people, while ensuring popular participation in the governance.

Republicanism came about as a reaction to the theocratic monarchy rule in the Ottoman Empire. The principle that “sovereignty belongs to the people without qualifications and conditions” was a principle set to delineate “not to whom sovereignty belonged, but, rather, to whom it did not belong” and Sultan surely did not have any share in sovereignty.<sup>29</sup> The Sultan derived his legitimacy from God and he was the sole authority in government. This regime was attempted to be challenged

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<sup>27</sup> RPP was founded by Atatürk on 9 September 1923. It is the successor of the Anatolia and Rumeli Defense of Rights Organization that led the War of National Liberation against the allied powers. After establishing the Republic, Atatürk became the head of the RPP until his death in 1938. The six arrows in the party emblem represents these six principles, also known as the Six Arrows of Kemalism.

<sup>28</sup> Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri I* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1961), 320.

<sup>29</sup> Heper, *The State*, 51.

by a Constitutional Monarchy that was set up in 1876. However, this was an unsuccessful attempt since the Sultan remained as the sole authority in practice. The constitution granted the Sultan the right to disband the Parliament and representatives of the people were not influential enough to challenge the powers of the Sultan.<sup>30</sup> Had been aware of the deficiencies of this regime, Atatürk founded the secular Turkish Republic, when there were only three other established secular republics in the advanced world: USA, France and Switzerland.

#### *2.1.2.2 Nationalism*

Nationalism was a crucial component of development, for Atatürk. He said in his famous speech on 20 March 1923 that “Let us be aware that a nation which has not found her national identity is prey to other nations.”<sup>31</sup>

Turkish nationalism was championed by the Union and Progress Party early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Ziya Gökalp was one of the proponents of nationalism throughout the period. Ziya Gökalp argues that nationalism arose in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, among Ottoman intellectuals due to the political and cultural decline of the Muslim countries and the empire itself in contrast to the development in the West; and the dominant ideology, nationalism, showed them the way towards development.<sup>32</sup> Thus, some of the Turkish intellectuals followed the dominant ideology of the West, and embraced nationalism. Though these ideological commitments during the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century constituted a major source of Mustafa Kemal’s nationalism, two sets of ideas bear important differences. Atatürk’s nationalism was not expansionist whereas Ziya Gökalp and Unionists had a rather

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<sup>30</sup> Suna Kili, *The Atatürk Revolution* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2003), 98.

<sup>31</sup> Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, *Atatürk’ün Söylev ve Demeçleri II* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1961), 142-3.

<sup>32</sup> Uriel Heyd, *Türk Ulusçuluğu’nun Temelleri* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2002), 103.

expansionist view, in which they had the goal of unifying all the Turks in Anatolia and Central Asia under Pan-Turanist ideology.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, Kemalist elite of the new Turkish Republic adopted nationalism as a means of ensuring development and overcoming the inferiority complex that emerged after the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the wars that it lost.<sup>34</sup> The principal goal was to impose a self-consciousness through an identity based on citizenship rather than religion and to let the nation determine its own goals and aspirations.<sup>35</sup>

A republican regime needs a nation to rely upon and Atatürk created a nation out of former subjects of the Ottoman Empire.

### *2.1.2.3 Populism*

Atatürk's conception of populism can best be inferred from his speech to the Grand National Assembly on 1 November 1937: "The essence of the program in our hands prevents us from being interested only in certain sections of the citizen body. We are servants of all...We do not recognize differences between classes..."<sup>36</sup> It can be argued that Atatürk implied by populism a society without class distinctions among its people and equal participation of every individual to the governance. As Kili puts rightly, the Liberation War was won by cooperation between different classes of the society<sup>37</sup>, such as the military and civil bureaucracy, local notables and landlords, peasants, even some members of the palace. Thus, Atatürk aimed to keep this cooperation and unity intact through his idea of populism. As Webster points out, "Kemalist policy was/is to make [vertical social mobility] completely

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<sup>33</sup> Kili, *The Atatürk*, 314.

<sup>34</sup> Kili, *The Atatürk*, 308.

<sup>35</sup> Heper, *The State*, 64.

<sup>36</sup> *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri*, II, 180.

<sup>37</sup> Kili, *The Atatürk*, 324.

unhindered, whatever the impediments thereto from abuses of free enterprise.”<sup>38</sup> Kemalist idea of populism has an egalitarian connotation that envisages popular participation in governance. Granting women the right to vote and run in municipal elections in 1930 and in general elections in 1934, can be seen as an instrument of substantiating populist view.

#### 2.1.2.4 *Etatism*

Victors of the national liberation war were aware that independence could only be ensured by economic development. In the Turkish Economic Meeting held in İzmir on 17 February 1923, Mustafa Kemal emphasized Ottoman Empire’s closing its eyes to economic affairs as a major reason of its decline.<sup>39</sup> In the first years of the Republic, economic development was hoped to be achieved by adopting liberal policies, private sector was encouraged and banks were established to provide them with the necessary loans. However, this liberal policy failed due to the economic depression of 1929 and the insufficiency of the Turkish private sector. As Cooper suggests, Turkish private sector could not accumulate enough capital to establish businesses.<sup>40</sup> Apart from this, during the Ottoman period, Turks were excluded from commerce. Trade was conducted mostly by minority groups, and this caused the lack of know-how and technical knowledge among the people of the newly-founded Republic. When these problems were coupled with the Great Depression of 1929, policy-makers began to seek for alternative economic policies. The closest example of a successful economy was standing aside them-- the Soviet Union-- and they were influenced by its state-led economy and getting influenced by this model, Turkey

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<sup>38</sup> Donald E. Webster, *Kemalism: A Civil Religion?* (n.d., 1979), 48.

<sup>39</sup> Kili, *The Atatürk*, 340.

<sup>40</sup> Malcolm Cooper, “The Legacy of Atatürk” *International Affairs* 78, No.1 (2000), 117.

adopted *etatism* in 1931. Turkish policy-makers developed their five-year plan in 1933 for industrial development on the basis of the recommendations of a Soviet delegation.<sup>41</sup>

Atatürk's *etatism* envisages an interventionist state, which is active in areas of public interest and in areas where private sector is incapable to enter. Lewis posits that Kemalist elite never had the intention to collectivize the economy, or discouraging the private sector.<sup>42</sup> Their primary goal was once again immediate development.

#### 2.1.2.5 *Laicism*

1935 program of RPP illustrates the Party's and Kemalist elite's view of secularism:

As the conception of religion is a matter of conscience, the Party considers it to be one of the chief factors of the success of our nation in contemporary progress, to separate ideas of religion from politics, and from the affairs of the world and of the State.<sup>43</sup>

A modernization program had to be espoused by secularism, since Kemalist elite was taking over the sovereignty from religion and giving it to the people. Therefore, secularism was a fundamental principle of Kemalism.

Kemalism was attempting at reforming the attitudes of a society, which had defined itself in terms of its emotional attachment to Islam.<sup>44</sup> Laicism was an indispensable principle for realising a radical rupture from the *ancien* regime. To attain this goal, the new Republic envisaged an interventionist state that tries to

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<sup>41</sup> Cooper, "The Legacy," 117.

<sup>42</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 286.

<sup>43</sup> Lewis, *The Emergence*, 47.

<sup>44</sup> Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu, "Islam-State Interaction in Turkey", *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 28 (1996), 235.

detach religion from the social life, as well as from the state affairs. Kemalist laicism is significantly different from the Anglo-Saxon interpretation of secularism in which the state is neutral in religious affairs. However, Kemalist laicism envisages a state that is active in separating religion from the social life.<sup>45</sup>

Atatürk had suffered from the association of religion and governance throughout the liberation war. Entente powers forced the Caliph to get a fatwa issued by the *Sheikh-ul-Islam*, in order to gather support from the people in their fight against Mustafa Kemal and his supporters.<sup>46</sup> In the light of these bitter memories, Atatürk adopted secularism, while placing it at the center of his reform movements.

Ziya Gökalp had been one of the first advocates of secularism before Mustafa Kemal. However he used the term *la-dini* (non-religious) in order to avoid using the French word laicism. According to Lewis, usage of this term resulted in a confusion between laicism and irreligion, which led to paramount opposition from the Muslim clergy.<sup>47</sup> However, Kemalist laicism neither meant state's complete neutrality in religious affairs, nor liquidation of religion. Atatürk himself was raised by a religious mother and he did not have any inclination towards atheism.<sup>48</sup> He had two different conceptions of Islam, one of them was the more complicated, artificial and full of superstitions; and the one that does not oppose consciousness or preclude progress.<sup>49</sup> He believed that the first version, which was also dominant in the Ottoman Empire should be suppressed and the other one should be promoted.

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<sup>45</sup> Kili, *The Atatürk*, 353.

<sup>46</sup> Yılmaz Çetiner, *Son Padişah Vahdettin* (İstanbul : Milliyet, 1993) 253.

<sup>47</sup> Lewis, *The Emergence*, 403.

<sup>48</sup> Vamık Volkan, *The Immortal Atatürk : A Psychobiography* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1984), 28.

<sup>49</sup> Cizre, "Islam-State Interaction," 236.

#### 2.1.2.6 Reformism

Principle of reformism was initially instituted to ensure the development and modernization of the new state. Reformism guarantees the movement of the state towards modernization, it renders Kemalism open to change and innovation, when necessary.<sup>50</sup>

Mustafa Kemal learnt from the Ottoman case that a state is bound to decline if it does not catch up with innovations. With this reasoning he pursued many reforms in order to modernize the new Turkish Republic. Thus it can be confidently argued that reformism constitutes the most important instrument of Kemalism, which targets modernization. As Kili contends, “It is not just to ensure modernization that the society, political system and political culture have to be receptive and committed to change but also to sustain the continuity of the modern existence.”<sup>51</sup> Reformism aims to protect Kemalism from dogmatism and render it resilient in changing political circumstances. Dogmatism was seen as an obstacle for modernization, which is the ultimate goal that was aimed to realize through Kemalist principles. Reformism prevents the stagnation and decline of the system by keeping it open to changes.

As Selek points out, reformism has been misinterpreted as it aims to protect the existing system by revolting, when necessary.<sup>52</sup> However, in its essence reformism means to set new goals according to changing conditions and utilizing new means to achieve these goals.

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<sup>50</sup> Kili, *The Atatürk*, 366.

<sup>51</sup> Kili, *The Atatürk*, 366.

<sup>52</sup> Sabahattin Selek, *Anadolu İhtilali* (İstanbul: Cem, 1973), 741.

### 2.1.3 *Essence of Kemalism: A Weltanschauung*

“I do not want doctrines. They would hinder our progress.”<sup>53</sup>

I am leaving behind no cliché as a legacy. My legacy is science and rationalism. Times are changing rapidly. Claiming that one could establish rules which could never be subject to change in such a world would be tantamount to denying development of science and mind.<sup>54</sup>

These words clearly display Atatürk’s intention of leaving behind a flexible outlook instead of a dogmatic ideology. What lies behind the formulation of six arrows is a reaction against the *ancien* regime, and the urge to wipe off the hold of religion over the society and the state affairs, and what constitutes the core of those principles is pragmatism, and scientific thinking. But post-Atatürk Turkish politics has evolved in the opposite direction, by getting more stagnant and more dogmatic everyday. At this point a plausible question arises in minds as to how Atatürk’s pragmatic and flexible outlook was transformed into a rigid ideology. Murat Belge maintains that Atatürk merely pointed at some goals to be achieved rather than establishing an ideology since he always prioritized change and renovation. However, Belge argues that, Kemalism was transformed into a rigid ideology on purpose after its author’s death. In Belge’s words,

today Kemalism, of which the primary goal is Westernization, is being used by anti-Western circles as an ideological tool. Likewise, Kemalism, which is based on directing the people to continuous change, has turned into the most conservative ideology that exists in Turkey.<sup>55</sup>

This transformation is ably explained by Metin Heper. Heper argues that Kemalism was not designed as an ideology, as in Shilsian conceptualization. Edward

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<sup>53</sup> Sami Selçuk, *Longing for Democracy* (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye publications, 2000), 11.

<sup>54</sup> Selçuk, *Longing*, 11.

<sup>55</sup> Murat Belge, “Kemalist İdeolojinin Özellikleri,” *Radikal*, 7 October 2003.



Shils demarcates an ideology from an outlook by defining ideology as having an authoritative and binding formulation that is integrated around some surpassing principles and aims to address each and every question.<sup>56</sup> Custodians of an ideology claim to be speaking on behalf of a higher entity that is treated as sacrosanct. On the other hand, an outlook lacks authoritative and explicit promulgation, and it consists of different views, each of them emphasizes a certain aspect of that outlook they belong to but accepts the general premise of that outlook. Besides outlooks are less demanding to its adherents, they do not require full compliance with themselves.

Building upon the Shilsian conception of ideology, Metin Heper classifies Kemalism as a “Weltanschauung” rather than an ideology. He argues that “it did not for the long run intend to clamp upon society a closed system of thought...and longed for a dynamic rather than static consensus.”<sup>57</sup> Despite the “-ism” attached to his name, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk had never been an ideologue. He fervently refrained from dogmatizing his views that had been incorporated in the party program of RPP, in 1931. He adopted reformism that sustained the dynamism of the movement, and he responded to the question why RPP had no ideology by saying that if they had one, it would have frozen them. These examples clearly reveal that Atatürk never had the intention of establishing an ideology. What he originally brought about was an outlook that had the premise of modernization through scientific thinking. However, things have changed after Atatürk’s death, Kemalism was gradually transformed into an ideology, and the most drastic ideologization came alongside the 1980 military coup.

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<sup>56</sup> Edward Shils, “The Concept and Function of Ideology”, *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. 7 and 8 (New York: The Macmillan Company&The Free Press, 1972), 66 as quoted in Heper, “A Weltanschauung-turned Partial Ideology and Normative Ethics: ‘Atatürkism’ in Turkey,” *Orient* 25, no.1 (March 1984), 85, note 16.

<sup>57</sup> Heper, “A Weltanschauung,” 88.

As Heper observes rightly, 1961 Constitution did not make direct reference to Kemalism as an ideology; on the other hand 1982 Constitution frequently made mention of Kemalism as a guiding ideology. Article 2 states that the Republic of Turkey will be “loyal to the nationalism of Atatürk”<sup>58</sup> and the Preamble reads as follows:

No idea or opinion contrary to...the Turkish historical and spiritual values, nationalism, the principles and reforms and modernization concepts as set forth by Atatürk shall be supported.<sup>59</sup>

One might presume that such a direct reference to “Turkish historical and moral values” would connote to a rupture from Kemalist thought that is based on positivism, but it is not true. The National Security Council of 1980 coup merged Kemalism to a system of thought known as ‘Turkish-Islamic Synthesis’ so as to cope with political polarization, which established different camps centered around different ideologies.

Unlike the previous military interventions, the 1980 coup had its own ideology that was to be inculcated to the society so as to restore the order in society. This ideology is known as the “Turkish-Islamic Synthesis”, which was originally formulated by a club of intellectuals, which was named ‘The Intellectuals’ Hearth’ in the late 1960s.<sup>60</sup> Opinions and adherents of this club have a great deal of importance, because many policies of post-1980 governments were rooted in the Hearth’s opinions, and many members of the club had been appointed as high-ranking bureaucrats after the 1980 coup.

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<sup>58</sup> 1982 Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, part 1, Article 2.

<sup>59</sup> 1982 Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, Preamble. The phrase “no idea or opinion” was changed as “no activity” by an amendment done on 3 October 2001.

<sup>60</sup> Binnaz Toprak, “Religion as State Ideology in a Secular Setting: The Turkish-Islamic Synthesis,” in *Aspects of Religion in Secular Turkey*, ed. Malcolm Wagstaff (Durham: University of Durham Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, 1990), 10.

Members of the club believed that the history of the Turks had to be rewritten with special emphasis on pre-Islamic Turkish culture and its combination with Islam. They contend that pre-Islamic Turkish culture gave Turks certain values such as the fear of God, patriotism, love of the family, obedience and respect for customs; and they suggest that divergence from this culture for the sake of imitation of the West caused corruption and disorder in the society.<sup>61</sup> They regard Western style of education as primary source of disorder, and they suggest placing emphasis on Turkish and Islamic values in education and bolstering national art and music. They regard placing emphasis on the Turkish-Islamic synthesis through means of mass media, education and state planning as a cement that would reunite Turkish people. Consequently this synthesis was injected into Kemalism, which was previously a flexible outlook based on science and technology, and transformed it into a hard ideology that had a prescription for all kinds of problems in political and social life. In Toprak's words,

Both the legislation and the political discourse of the post-1980 period have revolved around the key concepts of national unity, ideological uniformity, social peace and political stability. These aims were to be achieved by a general process of depoliticization, coupled with a concerted effort to socialize the new generations within the framework of the ideals set forth in the Turkish-Islamic synthesis.<sup>62</sup>

A set of practices followed adoption of this formula: the Ministry of Education sent to schools a declaration stated that the Darwinian theory was based on scientific deception, the teaching of logic and philosophy in high schools was made optional whereas Article 24 of the 1982 Constitution made religious culture and moral education compulsory in primary and secondary schools, the canteens of

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<sup>61</sup> Toprak, "Religion as State Ideology," 11.

<sup>62</sup> Toprak, "Religion as State," 13.

several ministries were closed during Ramazan,<sup>63</sup> Article 26 of the Constitution prohibited use of some languages including Kurdish in the expression and dissemination of thought and strained any kinds of reflections of ethnic and sectarian differences, and the Higher Education Council was instrumental in carving the educational system in line with this new philosophy.

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<sup>63</sup> Andrew Mango, "The Consolations of Religion in Turkey" in *Aspects of Religion in Secular Turkey*, ed. Malcolm Wagstaff (Durham: University of Durham Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, 1990), 16-8.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF THE PROBLEMATIC ISSUES**

This chapter gives an account of how ideologization and in Heper's words "bureaucratization" of Kemalism occurred in the issues that are subject to the EU conditionality and that are the most important cases where ideologization of Kemalism revealed itself in the course of time. These issues are the Kurdish question, the Alevi question, the role of the military in Turkish politics, and limiting sovereignty that is directly linked to the EU membership. This chapter reviews the evolution of these issues, with special emphasis on the early Republican period and aftermath of the 1980 coup, so as to reveal the rupture from Kemalist outlook after the 1980 coup.

#### **3.1 Historical Evolution of the Kurdish Question**

##### ***3.1.1 Genesis of the issue***

The end of World War I had detrimental effects on the Central states that lost the war. Germany and Austria were driven into political and economic chaos by harsh peace settlements. Ottoman Empire also shared this fate, Allied powers were seeking to divide Ottoman land according to secret wartime agreements they had made.

According to those secret wartime agreements, all Ottoman land except Central Anatolia and Black Sea coasts were to be shared by Britain, France and Russia; and Mudros armistice that was signed in 1918 gave Allied powers the pretext they needed to start the invasion. However, the Bolshevik revolution toppled the empire in Russia and a Soviet government was formed. Newly formed Soviet government gave up on their claims over Southeastern Anatolia and revealed the secret wartime agreements. British and French decision to stick to the original agreements led to conflicts in Southeastern Anatolia, since Russian withdrawal brought to surface the conflicting interests in the region as to who would be in control. Paris Peace Conference (18 January 1919) turned out to be an arena for these rival groups. Two groups bear relatively more importance with regard to the basic direction of this thesis: the Armenians, and the Kurds.

The Armenians and the Kurds were after the same goal of having total control over Southeastern Anatolia. Armenians had a stronger voice during the Peace Conference since Kurdish tribes were fragmented. Some Kurdish tribes were enchanted by the Istanbul government's promise of full autonomy; and some tribes maintained their silence by Mustafa Kemal's offer to grant them equality within the new Turkish state that he was creating in return for their loyalty to the Empire's territorial integrity.<sup>64</sup> Thus, Kurdish areas in Southern Caucasus, Iraq and Eastern Anatolia "were being inexorably divided by the Peace Conference to satisfy everyone except the Kurds."<sup>65</sup> Urumiye area was being incorporated to Iran, and Mosul, Arbil, Suleymaniye and Kirkuk were being annexed to the British mandate of Iraq, with all their Kurdish population.

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<sup>64</sup> Stanford Shaw, *From Empire to Republic*, vol.2 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2000), 385.

<sup>65</sup> Shaw, *From Empire*, 743.

In order to succeed in these plans, the British politicians had to garner support from those Kurdish tribes who were to be incorporated into Iraq. Therefore, British intelligence started to provoke these tribes no later than March 1919, by touching upon their nationalist feelings and arousing aspirations of an independent Kurdish state. In the meantime Mustafa Kemal was very well aware that making a distinction between ‘Kurdish regions’ and ‘Turkish regions’ and establishing an independent Kurdish state over those so-called ‘Kurdish regions’ would have borne disastrous effects on the Turkish national struggle, since such an arrangement would divide the territory that was to be defended by the Turkish militias as a part of the National Pact. He was trying to place emphasis on the unmanageability of establishing and governing an independent Kurdish state in the region, since it was impossible to distinguish Kurdish populated areas from Turkish populated areas. In a telegram he sent to Kamil, a Kurdish deputy in the Ottoman parliament, Mustafa Kemal expressed his resentment from the disputes between the Turks and the Kurds in Diyarbekir, and he said that such incidents would be harmful to both “brothers-in-race.”<sup>66</sup> At that time Mustafa Kemal’s basic aim was to “include them [the Kurds] within the melting pot of a common Turkish, Muslim nationality.”<sup>67</sup>

Kurdish tribes’ attitude towards the liberation movement was quite fragmented during the period. The basic motive of the Kurdish tribes who supported Turkish national liberation movement was their fear of an independent Armenian state coming into being in Southeastern Anatolia. When Şerif Pasha, who was the Kurdish representative to the Paris Peace Conference, concluded an agreement with the Armenians and gave up a large part of Southeastern Anatolia to the Armenians,

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<sup>66</sup> ATASE, *Atatürk Özel Arşivinden Seçmeler, Vol.IV*, (Ankara: Genelkurmay Basımevi, 1996), 14, quoted in Andrew Mango, “Atatürk and the Kurds,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.35, No.4 (October 1999), 6.

<sup>67</sup> ATASE, *Atatürk Özel*, 744.

many Kurdish tribes' involvement in the national struggle intensified.<sup>68</sup> Besides Mustafa Kemal himself and Kazım Karabekir, who was the commander of the 15<sup>th</sup> army corps located in Erzurum, succeeded in ensuring some Kurdish tribes' obedience by offering assistance against Armenian claims over Southeastern Anatolia. In a telegram he sent to a Diyarbekir notable, Kasım Cemilpaşazade on 11 June 1919, Mustafa Kemal argues that all Muslim components of the society should cooperate closely to prevent the partition of the Ottoman land, and that he was "in favor of granting all manner of rights and privileges in order to ensure the attachment and the prosperity and progress of our Kurdish brothers, on condition that the Ottoman state is not split up."<sup>69</sup> Apart from their desire to keep the Armenians out of their region, what unified these groups was their Ottoman patriotism and Islamic solidarity. The Kurdish support to the National movement was also reflected in the number of delegates in the Erzurum Congress (23 July-7 August 1919) and in the Grand National Assembly: 22 of 56 delegates who attended the Erzurum Congress and 74 deputies in the Grand National Assembly were Kurds.<sup>70</sup> This solidarity among the Turkish and the Kurdish delegates was reflected in the decisions taken in the Sivas Congress (4-11 September 1919). The Congress agreed upon the need to prevent establishment of Armenian and Greek states over Ottoman territory, and to protect Caliphate. Besides, Sivas Congress also proclaimed that "all Islamic elements living in the abovementioned domains [the Ottoman lands within the armistice lines] are true brothers, imbued with feelings of mutual respect and sacrifice for each other, and wholly respectful of racial and social rights and local conditions."<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Kemal Kirişçi and Gareth M. Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey* (London: Frank Cass, 1997) 84.

<sup>69</sup> ATASE, *Atatürk Özel*, p. 33, quoted in Mango, "Atatürk," 7.

<sup>70</sup> Kirişçi and Winrow, *The Kurdish*, 79-80.

<sup>71</sup> Mango, "Atatürk," 10.



Some groups, on the other hand, were still being driven by their aspirations for independence. After the Mudros Armistice was signed and Allied Powers occupied Istanbul in 30 October 1918, some Kurdish leaders believed that they could have a share from the dismembered Ottoman Empire with the help of the British.<sup>72</sup> For this purpose they reactivated Society for the Rise of Kurdistan, which had been banned by the Ottoman government. This organization also sponsored many of the revolts in Kurdish-populated areas after the Turkish Republic was founded. During the period of 1919-21, four out of a total of 23 uprisings were organized by Kurdish tribes. The most significant ones were Cemil Çeto, Milli and Koçgiri rebellions.<sup>73</sup> Although eventually suppressed, these rebellions were threatening enough to get Mustafa Kemal and his associates concerned on the Kurdish discontent.

A major debate among the students of Turkish history is on whether Atatürk had toyed with the idea of granting autonomy to the Kurds or not, after witnessing the Kurdish discontent reflected in the rebellions. Stanford Shaw gives us a reliable account of the course of events. He states that Atatürk had expressed such a view during the İzmit Press Conference on 16 January 1923, but this passage was censored out of many publications of this press conference. He asserts that both Mustafa Kemal and The Grand National Assembly had agreed upon Kurdish autonomy, in a secret speech delivered on 10 February 1922 and on 22 July 1922, respectively.<sup>74</sup> Mango also points to the speech delivered by Mustafa Kemal during

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<sup>72</sup> Mango, "Atatürk," 5.

<sup>73</sup> Kirişçi and Winrow, *The Kurdish*, 85.

<sup>74</sup> See, Shaw, *From Empire*, 745. Unlike Robert Olson and David McDowall who argue that the issue of Kurdish autonomy was discussed in a secret session, Andrew Mango suggests that there is no evidence of such secret sessions. However, argues that no evidence of these secret sessions can be found. Mango claims that Olson builds his argument on British documents, which most probably had been taken from Kurdish sources that have no legal validity. Although Mango rejects the possibility of secret sessions to discuss Kurdish autonomy, he still maintains that Atatürk was considering Kurdish autonomy. He delineates that Mustafa Kemal initially had in mind the idea of Kurdish autonomy before he aimed at consolidating his rule starting at 1923. See Mango, "Atatürk," 14-6.

the İzmit Press Conference as a signal of his plans with regard to granting autonomy to the Kurdish populated areas. The crux of the speech lies in the following sentence:

As a result, wherever the population of a district is Kurdish, it will govern itself autonomously. Aside from this, whenever one speaks of the people of Turkey [Türkiye'nin halkı], they [the Kurds] should also be included...Now, the Turkish Grand National Assembly is made up of empowered representatives both of Turks and of Kurds, and the two elements have joined their interests and destinies.<sup>75</sup>

This indulgent attitude towards the Kurdish speaking community was displayed in the Articles 38-43 of Lausanne Treaty (24 July 1923) as well. Article 39/4 states that

No restrictions shall be imposed on the free use by any Turkish national of any language in private intercourse, in commerce, religion, in the press, or in publications of any kind or at public meetings.<sup>76</sup>

Similarly, Article 39/5 guarantees the right to oral use of languages other than Turkish before the courts for Turkish citizens speaking a language other than Turkish.<sup>77</sup>

Mustafa Kemal's references to the multiethnic character of the people of Turkey, the distinctiveness of the ethnicities living side by side and the need of Kurdish self governance can be traced in many of his speeches delivered from the beginning of the War of National Liberation until the year of 1923. However, during the committee meetings to draw up a new constitution, the issue of local government was not touched upon. The idea of granting Kurdish populated provinces the right to self-government was shunted. As Suna Kili suggests, "there was very little

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<sup>75</sup> Mango, "Atatürk," 16.

<sup>76</sup> Treaty of Peace with Turkey, and Other Instruments Signed at Lausanne on July 24, 1923, Section III, Article 39/4.

<sup>77</sup> Treaty of Peace with Turkey, and Other Instruments Signed at Lausanne on July 24, 1923, Section III, Article 39/5.

discussion on the section of the Constitution which was devoted to the administration of the provinces.”<sup>78</sup>

Andrew Mango identifies the reason behind this step back in Mustafa Kemal’s vision regarding the Kurdish autonomy as a change of priorities.<sup>79</sup> He correctly argues that Mustafa Kemal had to wield absolute power so as to create a secular and modern Republic, and any kind of devolution of power would have led to the failure of his plans to wipe off traces of the Caliphate and Sultanate and to establish a Republic that has an eye on the level of contemporary civilization. In Atatürk’s words, “sovereignty that rests on guns must only be a temporary expedient in a time of upheaval”<sup>80</sup> and this was the time for it. Atatürk had many rivals from inside the country: there was a liberal opposition that assumed transition to multi-party politics would follow the defeat of the Greek; there was a substantial amount of people, who had fought for independence but would resent abolition of the Caliphate; and there were perilous rivalries between Atatürk and his colleagues.

Şeyh Sait rebellion came at a time when Atatürk’s Republican People’s Party was being challenged by a vocal opposition.<sup>81</sup> The reasons behind this rebellion were diverse, a reaction to the centralization of governance, rise of Kurdish nationalism, and opposition to abolition of the Caliphate. The designs to create a secular state were bound to be contrary to the vital cement that was uniting the Kurdish tribes and the nationalist movement. Since the most important commonality between them was the desire to save the Caliphate, Mustafa Kemal’s plans were inevitably going to lead to a division within the cooperators of the War of National

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<sup>78</sup> Suna Kili, *Assembly Debates on the Constitutions of 1924 and 1961* (İstanbul: Robert College Research Center, 1971), 60.

<sup>79</sup> There are other accounts on the issue, which argue that the Kurdish question was dropped off the agenda as soon as the War of National Liberation ended. However, as Mango suggests, this does not explain the opposition’s silence regarding the promises of self-government that Mustafa Kemal had made during the War of National Liberation. See Mango, “Atatürk,” 18-9.

<sup>80</sup> As quoted in Lewis, *The Emergence*, 239.

<sup>81</sup> William Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military* (London: Routledge, 1994), 66-7.

Liberation. Draconian measures were taken to suppress the rebellion of the Kurdish Şeyh Sait and a “Confirmation of Tranquility Law” was enacted in March 1925, which gave the government stringent powers against any actual or potential opposition.<sup>82</sup> In such an environment Atatürk could not have tolerated upheavals based on ethnicity claims and he chose to suppress any kind of public expressions of ethnicity. The formulation of the Turkish historical thesis claiming that all civilizations had taken their roots from the Turkish people and a heavy cultural assimilation policy came along with the growing need to assume authority. This need led to the incorporation of nationalism by the Republican elite in the RPP program, which was to become the state ideology during the following decades.

Thus, it can be said that the principal goal was to impose self-consciousness through an identity based on citizenship rather than religion. Once a nation state is formed, traditional modes of governance have to be abandoned in order to compete and successfully operate in a system of other nation-states. Thus, as it was in the Turkish case, nation building is accompanied with political development, which was the ultimate goal of Mustafa Kemal.

By the 1950s, policies of single-party period started to bear fruit and Turkish society had started to become relatively modernized. Alongside the society as a whole, Kurdish population had also started to become well aware of their ethnicity, and they started to politicize as well. During the Democrat Party (DP) rule between 1950 and 1960 relatively liberal policies were adopted, and this liberal posture started to relax the strict assimilation policies of the single-party period.<sup>83</sup> DP rule initially ushered in a relatively more liberal period in terms of both economic and political liberalization, and this period brought about new chances for the Kurds

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<sup>82</sup> Hale, *Turkish Politics*, 69.

<sup>83</sup> Henri J. Barkey and Graham E. Fuller, “Turkey’s Kurdish Question: Critical Turning Points and Missed Opportunities,” *Middle East Journal*, 51:1 (1997), 64-5.

to express their grievances. Even the 1960 military coup did not retreat from these liberal policies. Although the military regime tried to adopt assimilation policies such as replacing Kurdish names of some villages with Turkish ones, the 1961 constitution had a liberal essence and it protected some basic rights such as freedom of speech and association.<sup>84</sup>

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, reflections of a Kurdish ethnicity were even more conspicuous. The New Turkey Party (NTP), most of whose members were the notables of the Eastern provinces, garnered more than 30 percent of the votes cast in the Eastern provinces in 1961. The Turkish Workers' Party (TWP), of the Marxist left, became the first legally recognized political party that admitted the existence of a Kurdish People who lives in Eastern Anatolia.<sup>85</sup>

Kurdish population was usually in close cooperation with Marxist or leftist oriented organizations and parties. The basic reason behind this cooperation was these organizations' and parties' recognition of the Kurdish reality. These organizations and political parties were further arguing that the economic backwardness of Eastern Anatolia was caused by the capitalist policies carried out hand in hand with policies that denied Kurdish identity. It was this convergence in their views that led to the emergence of many Marxist oriented Kurdish separatist groups during the 1970s.<sup>86</sup> The most important one of them was the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which organized its first congress in 1977 at Diyarbakır. Their activities came to an abrupt halt due to the 1980 military coup, but were resumed in 1984.

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<sup>84</sup> Barkey and Fuller, "Turkey's," 65.

<sup>85</sup> Kirişçi and Winrow, *The Kurdish*, 114.

<sup>86</sup> Kirişçi and Winrow, *The Kurdish*, 117.

### ***3.1.2 Aftermath of the 1980 Military Coup***

After the 1960s and 1970s, when Kurdish ethnicity was by and large coming to the surface, came the 1980 military coup. The new military regime decided to impose Kemalism in the way they had perceived it. As Barkey and Fuller put, “the military regime which seized power in 1980 instituted some of the most regressive and repressive policies towards the Kurds.”<sup>87</sup> They started to place emphasis on the indivisibility and uniformity of the nation, and on the ‘Turkishness’ of the people.<sup>88</sup> The 1982 Constitution was also symbolizing the staunch resistance against any reflection of Kurdishness. According to Article 26 of the Constitution, “no language prohibited by law shall be used in the expression and dissemination of thought”<sup>89</sup> and in 1983 a law that prohibited the use of Kurdish language was enacted. Article 134 reinstitutionalizes the Turkish Language Society [Türk Dil Kurumu] and the Turkish History Society [Türk Tarih Kurumu]. Arguments that a distinct Kurdish language was fictive, that the Turks and the Kurds had the same ancestors, and that ‘Kurd’ is a name given to mountain Turks, started to be heard frequently. But none of these measures sufficed to prevent further crystallization of a Kurdish ethnic identity.

In the early 1990s, firm grip on the Kurdish issue had started to ease. The most important developments took place during the presidency of Turgut Özal. Turgut Özal, who had declared that he had Kurdish roots, was in favor of a more liberal policy towards the Kurdish issue and enhanced dialogue between the parties. He had ground breaking proposals as early as 1991, such as the need to incorporate Kurdish language in the educational system, and granting the right to broadcast in

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<sup>87</sup> Barkey and Fuller, “Turkey’s,” 66.

<sup>88</sup> Barkey and Fuller, “Turkey’s,” 119.

<sup>89</sup> 1982 Constitution of the Republic of Turkey

Kurdish. Thus, the ban on the use of Kurdish language was abolished in April 1991, as an adjustment in response to the Kurdish refugee inflow after the Gulf War.<sup>90</sup> And then Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel declared that he recognized the Kurdish reality.<sup>91</sup> But these relatively constructive policies came to a halt after the sudden death of Turgut Özal. Demirel was elected to replace Özal as President and Tansu Çiller became the Prime Minister. After then Demirel began denying the so-called ‘Kurdish reality’, which once upon a time he had recognized; and Tansu Çiller was inexperienced and economy-oriented. Thus, state policy towards the Kurdish problem hardened, as the scale of the military operations in the South Eastern Anatolia increased.

Witnessing the emergence of Kurdish autonomy in Northern Iraq, Kurds living in Turkey also wanted to take their chance and the vicious conflict between the Turkish Armed Forces and PKK accelerated.<sup>92</sup> This armed conflict also found its mirror image in the political arena during the spring and fall of 1994. The banning of the Democracy Party (DEP), which was mostly supported by the Kurds, and imprisonment of its eight parliamentarians dimmed off the hopes for reconciliation.

## **3.2 The Alevi Question**

### ***3.2.1 From the War of National Liberation to the 1980 Coup***

The Alevi community has historically pursued a low profile position in Turkish politics, although they had been denied recognition as a religious creed<sup>93</sup> since the proclamation of the Republic. The basic reason for this ‘invisibility’ lies in

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<sup>90</sup> Gürbey, “The Development,” 14-5.

<sup>91</sup> Barkey and Fuller, “Turkey’s,” 56-7.

<sup>92</sup> Aram Nigogosian, “Turkey’s Kurdish Problem: Recent Trends,” in *The Kurdish*, ed. Olson, 41.

<sup>93</sup> Although the official policy favours defining Alevism as a sect of Sunni Islam, I used the term “creed” so as to distinguish Alevi and Sunni creeds of Islam.

the community's appreciation of the *laicist* nature of the Kemalist republic that abolished the Caliphate and ruled out the option of establishing a theocratic monarchy. In Bodrogi's words,

They were willing to accept the fact that they were still denied official recognition as a religious community, as long as the state generally banned religion from the public sphere and therefore also radically curtailed Sunni religious activities and institutions.<sup>94</sup>

Alevis were the most oppressed community in the Ottoman Empire. Since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when Kızılbaş upheavals were suppressed forcefully, most of them fled away to remote places and closed themselves to the outer world.<sup>95</sup> This marginalization went on till the break of Turkish War of National Liberation. Alevis welcomed the struggle of Mustafa Kemal and his associates, with a hope that Sunni Ottoman totalitarianism would be overthrown at the end of the Turkish War of National Liberation. Mustafa Kemal was also well aware that the Alevi population was so influential and well organized that it was instructive to garner their support throughout the War of Liberation. He and his closest associates visited the Hacıbektaş Dervish Lodge on 23 December 1919 to discuss the course of the National struggle and ensure the support of this influential Alevi center both financially and politically before leaving.<sup>96</sup> As part of this close cooperation, all developments regarding the National Struggle were immediately being conveyed to the center and to Çelebi Cemalettin Efendi, who was the head of the lodge. This communication network was clearly stated by Atatürk in his famous Nutuk as follows: "On 2 January 1920, we informed all central committees as well as Çelebi

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<sup>94</sup> Krisztina Kehl-Bodrogi, "Introduction," in *Syncretistic Religious Communities in the Near East*, eds. K. Kehl-Bodrogi, B. Kellner-Heinkele and A. Otter-Beaujean (New York: Brill, 1997), xii.

<sup>95</sup> Kehl-Bodrogi, "Introduction," xi.

<sup>96</sup> [www.alevibektasi.org](http://www.alevibektasi.org). Retrieved on 5 April 2005.



Cemalettin Efendi from Hacibektaş and Hacı Musa Bey from Mutki.”<sup>97</sup> Besides, Atatürk had numerous close associates, who were Alevis.<sup>98</sup>

Alevi community welcomed the proclamation of the Republic and the political and social reforms that ensued. Closure of religious schools and unification of education under the Ministry of Education, closure of Shari’ah courts and abolition of Shari’ah law, replacing Arabic script with Latin alphabet, abolition of Sheikh-ul-Islam and Caliphate in 1924 and establishment of a Republic in line with the principle of laicism were all appreciated by the Alevi community. These were the prizes for their staunch support to the National struggle; however they had to take the good with the bad. Republican period came with some drawbacks such as the establishment of Directorate of Religious Affairs and the ban on *tekke* and lodges. While Sunni population had the chance of going to mosques to worship, Alevi community had to secrete their religious rituals. Although the early republican period turned out to be a relatively tolerant period in terms of the policies adopted with regard to different religious beliefs and creeds, founders of the new Republic had the need to convert the *umma* that was inherited from the Ottoman Empire, into a nation. To that, they chose to construct the new identity on the bases of Turkish identity and Sunni Islam, which also was used as social glue. Despite all these negative developments, majority of the Alevis identified with Kemalism.<sup>99</sup> For example Alevis fought against the rebels during the first important Kurdish rebellion, Şeyh Sait rebellion in 1925. Although there had been minor uprisings of Kurdish

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<sup>97</sup> [www.alevibektasi.org](http://www.alevibektasi.org).

<sup>98</sup> Hüsamettin Ertürk, head of the Intelligence Agency; Ragıp Evrensel, his personal doctor, Ali Naci Baykal, head of the encryption department of Postal Service, were all Alevi-Bektasis. For further details visit [www.alevibektasi.org](http://www.alevibektasi.org).

<sup>99</sup> Kehl-Bodrogi, “Introduction,” xiii.

Alevis in 1921(Koçgiri) and 1937-8(Dersim), Van Bruinessen concludes that Kurdish Alevis never cooperated with Sunni Kurds in significant numbers.<sup>100</sup>

1960s and 1970s were decades that witnessed high levels of modernization, urbanization and political polarization. Alevi youth, who had been marginalized for so long stepped into the politics and aligned themselves with the radical left wing of the conflicting parties. Marxist ideologies started to command the Alevi youth. During the 1960s and 1970s, Alevi was identified with Marxist; the untrimmed moustache, which was a symbol of secrecy within Alevi community, became the symbol of Marxist-orientation; their focus had shifted from the problems of Alevi community to the class struggles and a vision of a Marxist revolution.<sup>101</sup> During the period, Alevis became natural allies with the radical left, whereas Sunni population was dragged to the extreme right camp. This led to the escalation of conflicts between Alevi and Sunni population and resulted in bloody clashes, such as the ones in Malatya, Çorum and Kahramanmaraş towards the end of 1970s.

On the other hand, high degree of politicization among the Alevi youth did not bring Alevi politics to life; Alevi identity was replaced by a leftist-revolutionary identity. Many observers asserted that vanishing of Alevi identity was a matter of time.<sup>102</sup> Even some political attempts to revitalize the Alevi identity turned out to be futile. The Union Party of Turkey was established in 1966, its votes had gradually decreased and it lost its political effectiveness totally after 1977.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Martin Van Bruinessen, "Kurds, Turks and the Alevi Revival in Turkey," *Middle East Report*, July-September(1996), 8.

<sup>101</sup> Van Bruinessen, "Kurds".

<sup>102</sup> Reha Çamuroğlu, "Some Notes on the Contemporary Process of Restructuring Alevilik in Turkey," in K. Kehl-Bodroghi, B.Kellner-Heinkele&A. Otter-Beaujean (eds.) *Syncretistic Religious Communities in the Near East* (New York: Brill, 1997), 25.

<sup>103</sup> [www.alevibektasi.org](http://www.alevibektasi.org). Retrieved on 10 April 2005.

### 3.2.1 *Aftermath of the 1980 Military Coup*

This modest posture of the Alevis came to an end after the 1980 military coup. As mentioned above, Alevis were ready to remain silent and support Kemalist Republic as long as state suppressed any kind of religious domination over politics. This equilibrium was wobbled by the 1980 military intervention and the policies that military junta pursued in its aftermath.

Government-led Islamization policy, and the ascendancy of Islamic fundamentalism in society disturbed the Alevis. Since they had been an enemy of Islamic reactionism due to their negative memories of the Ottoman rule, they became politicized once more, but this time with a goal of voicing their demands as a community. Çamuroğlu contends that establishment of Alevi both in the fields of media and politics, and increasing awareness of an Alevi identity are outcomes of a “defensive instinct” of the Alevis against the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, especially against the government-led promotion of Sunni creed.<sup>104</sup> As Ahmad correctly observes, “there is no doubt that the influence of Islam in Turkish politics and society has increased dramatically under the military government.”<sup>105</sup>

1980 military junta came with the idea of “Turkish-Islamic” synthesis, which would serve as a means for countering revolutionary ideas that had garnered a significant level of support among the Turkish youth. Popular inclination towards radical left could be counter-balanced by pushing Islam to the forefront, which by and large had the same support potential as leftist ideologies had.

So as to succeed in this goal, religious education that was to cover Sunni belief and rituals was made compulsory in high schools, Directorate of Religious Affairs was strengthened, and number of mosques built increased dramatically and

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<sup>104</sup> Çamuroğlu, “Some Notes,” 26.

<sup>105</sup> Feroz Ahmad, “Islamic Reassertion in Turkey,” *Third World Quarterly*, 10:2 (1988), 763.

Sunni prayer leaders had been appointed even to Alevi villages. This strategy persisted during the civilian governments that came to office after the 1980 coup. A few examples can be given to illustrate this continuity. In 1985, Arabic language was incorporated to Turkey's high school curriculum as a foreign language; prayer rooms were built in the government offices and in the parliament; and in 1988, a law was enacted to ban making of offensive allegations about the prophet, Allah and Islam.<sup>106</sup> Table 1 shows the dramatic increase in personnel recruitment at the Directorate of Religious Affairs after the first civilian government after the 1980 coup came to power in 1983. All these measures that promoted Sunni Islam as the official Islam, stimulated public expression and revival of Alevi identity in the mid-1980s.

Since then official policy towards the recognition of Aleviness has not changed. Directorate of Religious Affairs repeatedly declares that Aleviness is not a creed of Islam, it is merely a culture and a way of life within Islam and it even calls Alevi people to the mosques.<sup>107</sup> *Cemevleri*, which are the worshipping places of

TABLE 1 Personnel at the Department of Religious Affairs

Year	Supplementary Services	Religious Services	Management Services	Total
1979	1,035	47,744	1,977	50,756
1980	1,239	49,831	2,202	53,272
1981	1,239	49,831	2,202	53,272
1982	1,239	49,831	2,202	53,272
1983	1,239	50,130	2,202	53,571
1984	1,549	55,890	3,581	61,020

<sup>106</sup> Anat Lapidot, "Islamic Activism in Turkey since the 1980 Military Takeover," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, vol. 3(1997), 63.

<sup>107</sup> "Yolunu Arayan Alevilik," *Milliyet*, 21 August 2001.

1985	1,549	55,890	3,581	61,020
1986	1,639	61,696	3,682	67,017
1987	1,739	67,166	4,120	73,025
1988	1,864	77,725	4,673	84,262
1989	1,976	77,722	4,944	84,642

Source: The (Annual) Department of Religious Affairs Bulletin, Ankara, 1989, as quoted in Lapidot, "Islamic Activism," p.71.

Alevis have been regarded as cultural richness that is not comparable with mosques<sup>108</sup> and some hardliners had considered Alevis as the second largest group of separatists after PKK.<sup>109</sup>

### 3.3 Role of the Military in Politics

#### 3.3.1 *Stepping into the Political Scene*

Military's presence has been of central importance in Turkish politics since the establishment of the Ottoman Empire and its demise that gave way to the emergence of modern Turkey. 1909 coup of Şevket Pasha established the reformist Young Turk rule and military officers of the perished Ottoman Empire orchestrated the War of National Liberation.<sup>110</sup> Essential role of the military persisted during the early years of the resistance. Before 1924, there were significant numbers of serving army commanders, who also had seats in the Parliament; over 13 were deputies and some others were ambassadors or governors.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>108</sup> "Alevi Tepkisi Artıyor," *Radikal*, 9 October 2004.

<sup>109</sup> "Yolunu Arayan"

<sup>110</sup> Tim Jacoby, "For the People, of the People and By the Military: The Regime Structure of Modern Turkey," *Political Studies*, vol.51 (2003), p.673.

<sup>111</sup> Hale, *Turkish Politics*, p.70.

Atatürk himself strongly opposed military's involvement in politics. Although Atatürk turned out to be the dominant figure and the founder of the Turkish Republic, the War of National Liberation was not a product of one man's efforts, it was the collaboration of many groups and individuals. There emerged rifts within these groups after the war against Allied Powers was won, and inevitably these rifts led to profound struggles for power. In William Hale's words, "the most serious challenge to Atatürk's dominance came...from within the ranks of the political and military elite in Ankara."<sup>112</sup> Although Atatürk permit some of his close supporters within the military to hold posts in the Assembly throughout the War of National Liberation, later on he barred them from holding political posts and military ranks at the same time. The most important reason of his separating politics and the military was that he had strong rivals within the high-ranked military officers. Ali Fuat Cebesoy, Kazım Karabekir, Refet Bele and Cafer Eğilmez were challenging his dominance and their challenges were of major importance due to their military powers. Their opposition was so perilous that Atatürk appointed Kazım Karabekir and Ali Fuat Cebesoy to Anatolia, as army inspectors.<sup>113</sup>

It did not take long for Atatürk to introduce legal measures for detaching military personnel from politics. On 19 December 1923, Grand National Assembly enacted a law that obliged officers and soldiers to resign from the army before their election as deputies. This law also stated that the corps commanders who were currently members of the parliament could not take part in the discussions, unless they resigned their commands. Finally Article 40 of the referred law rendered the Grand National Assembly responsible for the command of the armed forces. Thus Turkish army was placed under control of civilian authorities by this law. In 3 March

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<sup>112</sup> Hale, *Turkish Politics*, 67.

<sup>113</sup> Hale, *Turkish Politics*, 72.

1924, the Chief of General Staff was made responsible to the President, and its seat in the cabinet was foregone. Later, Article 148 of the Military Penal Code consolidated these principles by barring military personnel from joining political parties, holding or participating political meetings, giving political speeches in public or prepare, sign or send to the press any declaration of a political character.

Apart from the strong opposition by some generals to Atatürk, another reason for adopting such measures was Atatürk's belief that participation in politics would downgrade military personnel's performance. He contends that

commanders, while thinking of and carrying out the duties and requirements of the army, must take care not to let political considerations influence their judgment. They must not forget that there are other officials whose duty is to think of the political aspects. A soldiers' duty cannot be performed with talk and politicking.<sup>114</sup>

However, there had been some declarations of Atatürk that causes confusion regarding his opinion on the role of the military. An illustrative example is his speech delivered at the Army Club in Konya in 1931. In this speech he encourages young army officers to be the guardians of the Republic:

You know that whenever the Turkish nation has wanted to stride towards the heights it has always seen its army, which is composed of its own heroic sons, as the permanent leader in the forefront of this march, as the permanent vanguard in campaigns to bring lofty national ideas to reality...In times to come, also, its heroic soldier sons will march in the vanguard for the attainment of the sublime ideals of the Turkish nation.<sup>115</sup>

Another example is the Article 34 of the Army Internal Service Law, which reads as "the duty of the armed forces is to protect and defend

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<sup>114</sup> Hale, *Turkish Politics*, 76

<sup>115</sup> Hale, *Turkish Politics*, 81.

the Turkish homeland and the Turkish Republic, as determined in the Constitution.”<sup>116</sup>

Despite this ambiguity, thanks to the dominant character of Atatürk, moderate outlook of Chief of the General Staff Fevzi Çakmak to politics and İsmet İnönü, who stuck with Atatürk’s ideal of a ‘professional military’, army stood aloof from politics until the first military takeover in 1960. Supreme War Council only had advisory powers and defense budget fell down sharply due to economic hardships. Yet, upper echelons of the military were sensitive towards the proposal to make the Chief of the General Staff responsible to the Minister of Defense instead of the President but a consensus was reached and the Chief of the General Staff was made responsible to the Prime Minister in 1944.<sup>117</sup> This incident is illustrative of the army’s posture regarding its position *vis-à-vis* the political institutions; they neither wanted to rule them nor to get less than they deserved.

This reasoning changed in the 1950s. DP came to power in 1950 by offering lavish subsidies and incentives to the agricultural sector and garnered most of its votes from the wealthy agriculturalists. The mid-1950s were characterized with high inflation rates and low salaries in the public sector that “diminished the prestige and influence of the military-civilian bureaucracy.”<sup>118</sup> This inevitably caused resentment among the military ranks. However, this resentment could not be the only motive for the military officers to take over, as Szyliowicz argues. Szyliowicz asserts that military officers had gone through in the military an intense socialization program that changed their values and attitudes and imposed Kemalist behaviors

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<sup>116</sup> Hale, *Turkish Politics*, 81

<sup>117</sup> Hale, *Turkish Politics*, 83.

<sup>118</sup> Kemal Karpaz, “Military Interventions: Army-Civilian Relations in Turkey Before and After 1980,” in Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin (eds.), *State, Democracy and the Military Turkey in the 1980s* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1988), 139.



instead of earthly concerns of money.<sup>119</sup> Thus, this resentment culminated in a military coup when it was coupled with DP's growing authoritarianism such as its threats of closing RPP, and its increasing reference to religion by means of restoring the call to prayer in Arabic, allowing the burgeoning of *tarikats* and building 15.000 new mosques<sup>120</sup> paved the way to the 1960 coup.

After the coup, no junta was installed; instead, coup-makers chose to give most of the positions to the RPP, while reserving some of the important positions to military personnel, basically "by the fall of 1960 the government was virtually in the hands of the RPP once more."<sup>121</sup> Coup-makers were quick to return government to civilians, therefore elections were held in 1961 after the Constitution was prepared. The 1961 Constitution can be considered as a relatively liberal constitution, which recognized existence of labor rights, championed free enterprise and political freedom. However, it also created the National Security Council that was to leave its imprint on Turkish politics since then.

Some exit guarantees employed by the makers of the 1960 coup (National Unity Committee-NUC) aimed at consolidating military oversight in politics. First one is the establishment of National Security Council whose powers were designed by Article 111 of the Constitution. The Council was to include ministers whose number was going to be determined by law as well as the representatives of the forces. The Council was to have the power to submit its views to the Council of Ministers to assist it in the decision-making process. Besides, article 70 of the Constitution made ruling members of NUC lifetime members of the Senate.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Joseph S. Szyliowicz, "Elites and Modernization in Turkey," in Frank Tachau (ed.) *Political Elites and Political Development in the Middle East* (New York: Wiley, 1975) as quoted in Metin Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey* (Walkington, England: Eothen Press, 1985), 84.

<sup>120</sup> Gareth Jenkins, "Muslim Democrats in Turkey?" *Survival*, 45:1 (2003), 48.

<sup>121</sup> Karpat, "Military," 141.

<sup>122</sup> Ergun Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation* (London: Boulder and Lynne Reinner Publishers, 2000), 107 and 113.

Before the 1960 coup, there were some cleavages among the military officers with regard to the shape of the coming coup. Some junior officers were championing a prolonged military rule, whereas senior officers were in favor of ‘cleaning up the mess’ and stepping down. As the intervention was pursued in the way senior officers wanted it to be, radicals were sacked from the NUC and sent abroad on diplomatic duties. One of those 15 officers was Alparslan Türkeş who came back to Turkey in 1963 and joined the Republican Peasants’ Nation Party, which was renamed as the Nationalist Action Party (NAP) in 1965. This party and later on the NAP turned out to be the umbrella party for the right extremists while Marxism was spreading quickly among the universities and trade unions.

Bloody conflicts between these two camps exemplified the late 1960s. Parties represented in the Parliament increased to eight, leading to the paralysis of legislation. Thus, the military stepped in once again, this time through the National Security Council, in March 1971. Commanders called the incumbent administration to an understanding above party politics and they warned that the military could fully intervene unless necessary measures were taken to prevent disorder.<sup>123</sup> In response, Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel immediately resigned from his post and a military-backed government was formed under the leadership of Nihat Erim.

The 1971 intervention enhanced the role of the military in politics by making an amendment in Article 111 of 1961 Constitution that drew the borders of National Security Council. The word ‘submits’ was replaced by ‘recommends’ and ‘force representatives’ by ‘force commanders’, which strengthened the legal and political footing of the institution. Alongside these amendments, Armed Forces were exempted from the audition by the Court of Accounts (Article 127) and the scope of

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<sup>123</sup> George Harris, *Turkey: Coping with Crisis* (Boulder: Westview press, 1985),162.

functions and the powers of the military courts was extended.<sup>124</sup> Finally the State Security Courts were established for trying cases related to the security of the state.

### **3.3.2 *The 1980 Coup***

Out of the same atmosphere that led to the 1971 intervention came the 1982 coup. Political and economic breakdown, frequent challenges against secularism disturbed the military officers. Basic polarization forces were the NAP, National Salvation Party (NSP) and small communist groups. The coup was triggered by the mass rally of NSP at Konya, in which majority of attendants refused to stand up while the national anthem was played.<sup>125</sup>

This coup was considerably different from the previous ones. First of all, this time the military was not accompanied by the RPP. Organic link between the RPP and the military had severed in the aftermath of the 1971 coup by memorandum. Ecevit became the chairman of the RPP in 1972 after the death of İnönü, and the path that the party had been following changed. Major divergences occurred in the policy positions of the party and the military, especially regarding the conception of nation and “the idea that Turkey was a national state.”<sup>126</sup> Thus, this time military did not enjoy the support of a political party.

The 1980 coup went further in reinforcing military’s position in politics. First amendment was done on the beloved playground of consecutive military juntas, on the article that regulates functions and the establishment of National Security Council. Article 118 of the Constitution enlisted the civilian members of the Council instead of leaving their determination to the law. In this fashion “numerical equality

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<sup>124</sup> Özbudun, *Contemporary*, 108 and 111.

<sup>125</sup> Heper, *The State*, 124.

<sup>126</sup> Karpat, “Military Interventions,” 147-8.

of military and nonmilitary members was assured.”<sup>127</sup> Civilian members of the NSC were the President, Prime Minister, and the ministers of National Defense, Interior, and Foreign Affairs. Other than this, the Council of Ministers was obliged to take into consideration ‘with priority’ the recommendations of NSC. Another law equipped the military with an invaluable tool to be utilized to legitimize its active role: the Law on the National Security Council (Law 2945) made a broad definition of national security and its components. According to the law national security included protection of the constitutional order, state’s political, social, cultural, economic interests in the international arena, and the nation’s integrity.<sup>128</sup>

The Law on the State of Emergency (Law 1402) was amended in 1980 so as to grant a sort of immunity to martial law commanders; no judicial appeals were to be made by civilian courts against acts of martial law commanders. This law also extended the scope of functions and powers of the martial law courts by permitting their trial of crimes outside the martial law regions, in case they are related to a crime committed within the borders of a martial law area. This law reveals the profound differences of opinion between the military and Prime Minister Ecevit, since was regarded as a response to Ecevit’s introduction of coordination principle that had required government approval of martial law authority’s decisions.

Election of General Kenan Evren as President during the Constitutional referendum was also a peculiar case. A ‘Yes’ vote cast for the Constitution meant a ‘Yes’ vote cast for Evren’s Presidency. Turkish people, who were tired of bloodshed inevitably cast their votes in favor of the new Constitution; and by design in favor of General Evren’s Presidency.

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<sup>127</sup> Özbudun, *Contemporary*, 108.

<sup>128</sup> Özbudun, *Contemporary*, 109.

Among the most authoritarian practices of 1980 junta were its establishment of the High Board of Supervision, and the Higher Education Council. The High Board of Supervision was a body designed for supervising public entities, especially to keep an eye on civil bureaucrats' ideological affiliations.<sup>129</sup> The Higher Education Council was created so as to regulate appointments, promotions and daily work in the universities. These two institutions symbolized firm grip of the military in political and social life.

The 1982 Constitution also banned former politicians' political activities for ten years. Although this ban was repealed in 1987, its mention is instructive as to show the extent of military authoritarianism that persisted during the military rule of 1980-83.

In 1983, Özal government came to office and a division of labor emerged effortlessly; Evren was active in defense and foreign policy areas whereas Özal was more involved in economic policy-making.<sup>130</sup> When Evren's term as the President ended, Özal was elected as President in 1989. Özal had a distinctive way of governance, and this led to disputes between him and the military. These disputes came to surface after Turkey's participation to the Gulf War, which Özal saw as an opportunity to ally Turkey with Western countries, and to have a say in the post Cold War designs of the world.<sup>131</sup> Consequently, the Chief of General Staff Necip Torumtay, who was opposed to Turkey's participation to the War, resigned. Many analysts assessed this event as a key event on the way of civilianization of Turkish politics. Hale and many others argued that before, when a Chief of Staff opposed to a government policy, he would have orchestrated a coup; but now a Chief was

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<sup>129</sup> Heper, *The State*, 139-41.

<sup>130</sup> Heper, *The State*, 143.

<sup>131</sup> Gülistan Gürbey, "Özal Dönemi Dış Politikası," in *Devlet ve Siyaset Adamı Turgut Özal* (İstanbul, 20 Mayıs Eğitim, Kültür ve Sosyal Dayanışma Vakfı, 1996), 82.

resigning due to a dispute over security policy, which falls under the specialization of military.<sup>132</sup>

However these analyses were mere wishful thinking, as it turned out when the Welfare Party (WP) came to office as member of the coalition in 28 June 1996. Initial reaction of the military was to adopt a wait-and-see attitude. However mounting reports declaring that WP was after taking Turkey back to *Shari'a* order and WP's relentless efforts to recruit its supporters to state institutions as well as the dramatic increase in the Prayer Leader and Preacher School graduates and illegal Koran courses alarmed the NSC.<sup>133</sup> The dinner reception that Erbakan gave to the leaders of religious orders "was the last milestone in the unfolding of the...political crisis in Turkey."<sup>134</sup> After many attempts of President Demirel, at the 28 February 1997 meeting of the NSC resolutions, the issue was addressed harshly and on 26 May 1997 Supreme Military Council dismissed a number of military officers allegedly had been sympathizing with Political Islam. This confrontation between the military and Erbakan ended on 18 June 1997, when Erbakan resigned and President Demirel gave the duty of forming a new government to Mesut Yılmaz, leader of the Motherland Party.

### **3.4 Limitations on Sovereignty**

Foreign policy of national struggle period was personally conducted by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. In every occasion, he resisted offers of British or US mandate coming from every segment of the society, and from the ranks of the

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<sup>132</sup> For arguments in this line see, Hale, *Turkish Politics*, 288-9; Ahmet Evin, "Demilitarization and Civilianization of the Regime," in *Politics in the Third Turkish Republic*, eds. Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 25.

<sup>133</sup> Metin Heper and Aylin Güney, "The Military and the Consolidation of Democracy: The Recent Turkish Experience," *Armed Forces & Society*, 26:4 (2000), 640.

<sup>134</sup> Heper and Güney, "The Military," 642.

Anatolia and Rumeli Defense of Rights Organization that was the engine of national struggle. Basic pillars of this period's foreign policy were delineated in Erzurum Congress (23 July 1919) and Sivas Congress (4 September 1919), as resistance against capitulations, partition and offers of mandate.

Following years were also highly influenced by the memories of wartime and secret dismemberment agreements made by the Allied powers. Vali summarizes the fundamental national goals of modern Turkey's foreign policy as follows:

Because of her exposed geographical location, past historical experiences, and cultural 'isolation,' she [Turkey] is more conscious of independence than most other nations—that is more sensitive to any real or implied encroachment on her sovereignty.<sup>135</sup>

Foreign policy of the early Republican period was steered by the principles of “friendship with every nation”, “peace at home, peace at abroad” and “Turkey has no perpetual enemies”.<sup>136</sup> However there was another component of early Republican foreign policy, which was westernization “in spite of the west.”<sup>137</sup> Atatürk and his followers believed that there was only one civilization, which was the Western one, and they were fervently struggling for endorsement of Turkey as part of the Western civilization.

Turkey's policy during the early years of Republic was characterized by the quest of independence and sovereignty while committed to Western civilization. This goal of Westernization and European acculturation brought about a bias towards Western organizations despite all hurdles that needed to be overcome. This bias turned into a deep commitment to Western organizations after the Second World

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<sup>135</sup> Ferenc A. Vali, *Bridge Across the Bosphorus* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971), 69.

<sup>136</sup> Vali, *Bridge*, 55.

<sup>137</sup> Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal, 1964), 463-5 as quoted in Vali, *Bridge Across*, 56.

War, as the Soviet threats on Turkey threw it into a milieu of insecurity due to the Soviet threat on the East.

### **3.4.1     *The Lausanne Peace Treaty***

Glorious victory of Turkish national struggle was concluded by signing of the Lausanne Peace Treaty on 24 July 1923. During the preliminary session of the Conference, İsmet İnönü delivered a speech, which underlined Turkish side's request of recognition as an independent and sovereign state that was entitled to the same rights and privileges as other parties were.<sup>138</sup> The thorniest issue turned out to be the issue of capitulations, which Allied powers eagerly asked continuation of and the Turkish delegation had been resisting since the beginning of the national struggle. Turkish delegation won over the capitulations issue and capitulations were abolished. Other achievements of the Treaty can be pinpointed as settlement of the issue of reparation claims of Turkey against Greece, temporary settlement of the Straits question, and realization of the borders envisaged by the National Pact with the exception of Mosul. However, there were some outstanding issues that were to have great deal of significance in the following years, such as the Mosul question, population exchange between Greece and Turkey, and the Ottoman debts.

The significance of the Lausanne Treaty in the context of Atatürk's outlook towards pooling sovereignty lies in its provisions concerning the Straits and economic policy. On the one hand the treaty gave Turkey full sovereignty over its territory; on the other hand it partially curbed Turkey's sovereignty over the Straits and economic policy. Although capitulations were annulled, Lausanne set some restrictions on the new Republic's economic policies, such as extension of existing

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<sup>138</sup> Mehmet Gönlübol, *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası* (Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 1996) 50.



tariff rates for five years.<sup>139</sup> Similarly, the Straits question was resolved by internationalizing and demilitarizing the Straits. Straits were to be administered by an international commission, chaired by a Turkish citizen. The said commission was going to be under the Leagues of Nations mandate, and in case these terms were violated, Britain, France, Italy and Japan had the right to take action under League of Nations mandate.<sup>140</sup>

Thus, it can safely be argued that Mustafa Kemal and his close associate İsmet İnönü, who was also the head of the Turkish delegation to Lausanne, limited Turkey's sovereignty over some issues, for the sake of ensuring the new state's sovereignty in a broader sense.

### **3.4.2 *Entrance to the League of Nations***

During the Lausanne Peace Conference, there were two major outstanding problems – namely the exchange of minorities and the Mosul question. Final decision on them could not be made, a joint commission was set up for the resolution of minority exchange issue, of which members were to be appointed by the League of Nations; and the Mosul question became so deadlocked that its settlement was postponed to the following months. However, the Turkish delegation's suspicions over the impartiality of this organization started coming to surface as early as the first remark of solving the minority dispute within the League of Nations machinery. The Turkish delegate İsmet İnönü declared that “since Turkey was not a member of the League, it would be inappropriate at that stage to consider using the League

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<sup>139</sup> Seha L. Meray, trans., *Lozan Barış Konferansları: Tutanaklar, Belgeler* (Ankara: Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Yayınları, 1972), as quoted in Ali Tekin, *The Political Economy of Turkish Foreign Trade Policy Reforms: The Cases of 1958, 1970 and 1980 Compared*, Ph.D. dissertation (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1990), 33.

<sup>140</sup> Gönlübol, *Olaylarla*, 52.

machinery.”<sup>141</sup> Despite Turkey’s relentless objections, the issue was decided to be settled by the League of Nations, but Turkish delegate and public opinion had ever-growing suspicions that the League was just a tool of the Allied Powers, especially Britain’s.<sup>142</sup>

These suspicions over impartiality of the League were rejuvenated by the Mosul question. The Mosul question was a sensitive issue that could not be resolved in Lausanne but it was decided to be taken before the League of Nations, if Britain and Turkey could not settle it by bilateral talks within the nine months following Lausanne. Moving through this decision taken in the Lausanne Treaty, the Mosul question was referred to the League of Nations after nine months of failure to resolve the issue. However there was an important clash between Turkey and the League concerning the binding power of the final decision taken by the League. Turkey argued that it was primarily a political problem that could not be resolved through legal mechanisms, whereas the League argued that the Lausanne Treaty referred to the League as the final resort in case a resolution was not reached between Britain and Turkey. This clash led to Turkey’s withdrawal of its representative from the negotiations. Thus, the League reached a settlement in 16 December 1925 in a session while Turkish representative was absent and decided to give Mosul to Iraq.<sup>143</sup>

At that point, everybody was curious about Turkey’s reaction to the proposed arrangement, which was drawn without Turkey’s consent, and even its attendance. Striking was Turkey’s concurrence with the proposal to draw borders roughly in a way that the British would have suggested. The basic reason behind this was its fatigue due to long years of wars.

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<sup>141</sup> Yücel Güçlü, “Turkey’s Entrance into the League of Nations,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, 39:1 (January 2003), 188.

<sup>142</sup> Güçlü, “Turkey’s,” 189-90.

<sup>143</sup> For further details of how the Mosul question was resolved, see Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası, vol.1* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2001) 260-7.

This brief account of how Mosul question was settled is instructive as to understand the extent of Turkish suspicion of and resentment for the League. It is striking that after this course of events Turkey decided to join the League of Nations in 1932. Several reasons behind this decision can be identified, despite all these bitter relations. Turkey had started to adopt a policy of “collective security” by the end of 1920s and the rise of the Nazis and aggravating economic and political problems in Europe produced a feeling of insecurity among the elites.<sup>144</sup> Another reason was its policy of not being left out of an international organization that had the potential of giving a new direction to world politics. And final reason was Atatürk’s and Turkish elites’ unwavering drive of Westernization. By joining the League of Nations Turkey had for the first time broke off with its isolationist policy and aligned itself with the Western powers.

The 1930s were the years of fascist aggression and troubled relations in world politics. Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin were bluntly supporting – both militarily and politically -- opposing parties of the Spanish civil war, and tension was further escalated after Italians sank a Spanish ship in Turkish territorial sea in 1937. In response, a conference was convened with participation of the Mediterranean states for ending the existing state of insecurity in the Mediterranean. In that conference the Turkish delegation, which was acting in accordance with Atatürk’s instructions, permitted French and British ships’ use of Turkish naval bases in their fight with Italian aggression.<sup>145</sup> This permit was a clear reflection of Turkey’s growing belief in collective security; since 1932 Italy had been fortifying the Dodecanese Islands that were too close to the Anatolian mainland and this aggravated Turkey’s feeling of

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<sup>144</sup> Güçlü, “Turkey’s Entrance,” 204.

<sup>145</sup> Feroz Ahmad, “The Historical Background of Turkey’s Foreign Policy,” in Lenore G. Martin and Dimitris Keridis (eds.) *The future of Turkish foreign policy* (Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press, 2004), 21.

insecurity in a conflictual environment and pushed it to seek alliances that could counterbalance the Italian threat.

Then came the Second World War that turned out to be a major challenge to Turkish policy makers. Turkey adopted a neutrality policy, which it successfully pursued owing to “diplomatic rope-dancing”<sup>146</sup> and luck. Despite belligerent parties’ efforts of inducing Turkey to war, Turkey remained neutral and it waged war against Germany only three months (23 February 1945) before the end of the World War II, so as to get acceptance to San Francisco Conference as an original member.

The end of the World War II, and approaching Cold War incited establishment of security alliances and political organizations, of which the most important ones were the Council of Europe and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Increasing threats in a war torn continent triggered both military and political cooperation among the European states, and Turkey wanted to have a part in these structures, due to its commitment to Westernization, economic problems and perception of insecurity. Particularly Turkey’s bid in NATO membership is illustrative of these motives. After the war came to an end, the Soviet Union increased its threatening demands from Turkey; it asked for a revision on the Montreux Convention of 1936 that had given Turkey full sovereignty over the Straits. Soviet Union was pushing for joint defense of Straits, which Turkey was opposing vehemently. Aside of this security motive, Turkey was concerned should US extend aid to NATO members; it would reduce its aid extended to Turkey. Final motive was the ultimate goal of westernization. In Karaosmanoğlu’s words, “Turkey’s decisiveness in joining NATO derived mostly from a profound belief in

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<sup>146</sup> Vali, *Bridge Across*, 35.

Western values and in the virtues of Western political systems.”<sup>147</sup> Thus, it applied for NATO membership in May 1950, but its application was turned down.

The objections raised against Turkey’s NATO membership were similar to those put forth by the EU today. Its insecure neighborhood, its geographical location that did not qualify for being ‘Atlantic’, and its predominantly Muslim population were the most common grounds of objection, and similarly Turkey was being offered alternative forms of ‘special relationship’ models such as associate membership.<sup>148</sup> In such an environment the Korean War, which later turned out to be the key that set the ball rolling for Turkey’s NATO membership, broke out. This was an opportunity beyond compare for Turkey to display its commitment to virtues of collective security. Turkey took advantage of this opportunity and sent a mixed brigade of 4,500 men, which was the third largest after the US and South Korean forces.<sup>149</sup> But sending troops to Korea was not all that it took to join NATO; President Bayar’s threat to “reappraise Turkey’s orientation in the Cold War”<sup>150</sup> if Turkey was not admitted to NATO was also a key factor to induce US and European allies of NATO to let Turkey in.

After its accession to the organization, Turkey had contributed to the alliance as much as it could. 15 divisions of Turkish Armed Forces was assigned to NATO, 29 bases were accessible to NATO during the Cold War. But the most controversial contribution was bilateral treaties that were signed between Turkey and the US. The Agreement between Parties to the North Atlantic Treaty Regarding the Status of Their Forces, signed on 19 June 1951, granted parties the right to establish facilities, deploy contingents and to subject them to their domestic law. In line with

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84 Ali Karaosmanoğlu, “The Evolution of the National Security Culture and the Military in Turkey,” *Journal of International Affairs*, 54:1 (Fall 2000), 209.

<sup>148</sup> Vali, *Bridge across*, 117 and 36.

<sup>149</sup> Vali, *Bridge across*, 37.

<sup>150</sup> Ahmad, “The Historical Background,” 32.

this agreement the US made 54 bilateral agreements that were concluded without getting parliamentary consent.<sup>151</sup> These agreements confined Turkish authorities' sovereignty in certain areas, since they went as far as envisaging establishment of special postal services, special tribunals that were subject to US law, and duty free shops for the US contingents deployed on Turkish soil.

### **3.4.3     *Limitations on Sovereignty due to the relations with the EU***

By and large, the most important arena for discussing Turkey's ability and/or willing to partially surrender its sovereignty is Turkey's long-lasting relations with the EU. Basic turning points in Turkey-EU relations in the context of limiting sovereignty are the Ankara (Association) Agreement, Customs Union Agreement and application in 1987 for full membership.

Turkey's application to the EEC came as of 1959, right after the Greek application. Main motive behind the application was westernization *per se*, since the Turkish government was seeking to align itself with the West and prevent Greece from having an upper hand in West European organizations; and the application resulted in the conclusion of an Association Agreement (Ankara Agreement) in 1963 between the EEC and Turkey. What is striking in this agreement is Turkey's insistence on an agreement more than a free trade agreement that makes reference to a future Customs Union as well as political commitments. Turkish government wanted to make sure that the EEC puts the prospect of full membership at the end of the tunnel.

Again, so as to compel the EU for admitting Turkey to membership, the Turkish government, a coalition of the True Path Party (TPP) and the RPP, joined the

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<sup>151</sup> Gönlübol, *Olaylarla*, 235-6.

Customs Union in December 1995. This way, Turkey became the only state to have a Customs Union with the EU without being a full member. Turkey, through the Customs Union agreement, surrendered its sovereign rights in foreign trade policies. By joining the customs union, Turkey was obliged to comply with the European Union's common tariff rates and to align its competition and taxation policies with the EU law. This was a great deal of sovereignty relegated in order to support the country's bid for the EU accession, as a full member.

This analysis of the evolution of key issues raised by the EU conditionality, namely the Kurdish question, the Alevi question, the role of the military in politics and limitations on sovereignty. The primary goal of this chapter was to reveal the rupture from Atatürkist practices after the 1980 military coup concerning the Kurdish question, the Alevi question and the role of the military. The last section of the chapter gave an account of how limitations on sovereignty had been handled prior to Turkey's recognition as a candidate country, since one of the most common assertions of the orthodox Kemalists after Turkey's recognition as a candidate country is that limitations on national sovereignty in policy making and consequently Turkey's EU membership are unacceptable. The following chapter will analyze in further detail the orthodox views regarding the limitations of sovereignty as well as other key areas that cause conflict between the EU' requirements and the orthodox interpretation of Kemalism.

## CHAPTER IV

### ORTHODOX AND NEO-KEMALIST VIEWS

Although “the history of the times shows how slow and hard social, scientific, and ideological changes are,”<sup>152</sup> Edward Shils identifies endogenous and exogenous sources of changes in ideologies. Ideologies change because of intellectual sources such as the intellectual efforts of its adherents to clarify the inconsistencies or filling the gaps in it, and exogenous sources such as the pressure of external reality.<sup>153</sup> Shils argues that:

the world does not easily accommodate itself to the requirements of ideologies. The facts of life do not fit their categories; those who live their lives among these facts do not yield to the exhortations and offenses of the ideologists...Despite resistance, the ideology is retouched, at first superficially, later more deeply.<sup>154</sup>

The first type of efforts were observed during the first years of the republic as early as the 1930s, while three major groups were after dominating Kemalism and Turkish political life: ‘Conservative Kemalists’, ‘*Kadrocu* Kemalists’ and ‘Re-constructivist Kemalists’. The Conservatives were modernist in politics and conservative on cultural matters. They advocated that religion should be separated from state affairs but that it could not be detached from the social life and the national identity since it was a part of the Turkish culture. And they believed that culture should not be

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<sup>152</sup> Bernard Barber, “All Economies are ‘Embedded’: The Career of a Concept, and Beyond,” *Social Research*, 62:2 (Summer 1995), 3.

<sup>153</sup> Shils, “Ideology,” 70-1.

<sup>154</sup> Shils, “Ideology,” 71.



questioned in the light of modernist assumptions, because culture was a matter of historical continuity and an outcome of the cumulative experiences of a society; and it was the primary social cement. On the other hand, the re-constructivists had the goal of reshaping the society in line with the secularist ideals. They wanted to erase all kinds of morality based on religion and they tried to create a classless society based on secular morality. They believed that people should be inculcated with revolutionary secular ideas in order to reach efficient democratic governance. They contended that the people should be matured and inculcated spiritually before governing the country. Thus, the re-constructivists shoulder the responsibility of educating and reshaping the people in accordance with the revolutionary values. To this end they even utilized religious language while referring to revolutionary issues. They called the People's Houses as the "Temples of Ideal" and Atatürk's Nutuk was considered as the "Holy Book."<sup>155</sup> The Kadrocu Kemalists were dedicated to constructing an ideology for the unfinished Turkish revolution. They regarded democracy, liberalism and individualism as harmful to the development of the society. Unlike the re-constructivists, who sympathized the French Revolution and its Jacobin nature, the Kadroculus were degrading European values including the concepts introduced by the French Revolution. They wanted to have a classless society just like the re-constructivists and they regarded classical democracy as a threat for this classless society. Thus, they advocated an authoritarian rule delivered by the hands of a single-party instead of a multi-party regime.<sup>156</sup> Although the Kadrocu Kemalists were focused on their opinions on economy and politics, it can be

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<sup>155</sup> Ertan Aydın, *The Peculiarities Of Turkish Revolutionary Ideology In The 1930s: The Ülkü Version Of Kemalism, 1933-1936*, Ph.D. dissertation (Ankara: Bilkent University, 2003), 9-15.

<sup>156</sup> Temuçin Faik Ertan, *Kadrocular ve Kadro Hareketi* (Ankara: T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1994) 117-32.

said that they were seeking a cultural identity different than the Ottoman identity and they sympathized the Central Asian culture.<sup>157</sup>

However these attempts were relatively weak and they were attempts from within the Kemalist circles without having an external anchor for this revision project. Today Shils' second source of ideological change is on the scene; change borne by the EU conditionality. Those who live by the principle of civilizationism regard the EU membership as a one-way route. However the EU membership does not get along well with the prevalent Orthodox interpretation of Kemalism. Consequently there emerged a pressure from the society for rethinking the Orthodox interpretation of Kemalism. The EU candidacy became a proper external anchor and due to this positive signal, a notable public support emerged in favor of the EU membership. As İlter Turan posits,

external support for change in a society is effective if such change is desired by significant segments of the domestic population and the external actors appear not to impose but to appreciate and reward change.<sup>158</sup>

Therefore, a pressure for revision of the ideology is imposed on the ideologists of Orthodox Kemalism. This pressure to recalibrate Kemalism is growing everyday due to the EU conditionality, which seriously penetrates into the red lines of orthodox Kemalist ideology. This chapter makes an overview of the Orthodox and neo-Kemalist views on sensitive issues of Kemalism that have been touched by the EU conditionality, such as the Kurdish question, the Alevi question, the role of the military and the EU membership in general.

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<sup>157</sup> For a detailed analysis of these groups, see, Ertan Aydın, *The Peculiarities*, 96-124.

<sup>158</sup> İlter Turan, "The Turkish Political System: Instability and Hurdles," in *Turkey*, ed. Bertil Dunér, 22.

#### **4.1 Orthodox Kemalists**

This group is the beholder of the widely accepted interpretation of Kemalism that has been dominating Turkey's political scene particularly since the 1950s. Turkish military's views are highly representative of this group's basic interpretations. Following analysis of the military's attitudes towards some controversial elements of the EU conditionality is based on high-ranking military officials' declarations on various issues. Homogeneity of military education, isolated work conditions and the military discipline of high-ranking officials give us an opportunity to presume their representation of the military as a whole.

Contrary to the common wisdom, although military has always been attached to the Kemalist reforms, initially it had not ideologized and defended Kemalism under Atatürk (1923-1938) and İnönü (1938-1950) as vigorously as it did after the full transition to multi-party politics in 1946. Military schools started to place emphasis on teaching Kemalism as an ideology only after the military got restless over the ideological fragmentation of Turkish society within a pluralistic political framework. Turkish military was initially disturbed by the DP's references to religion in the 1950s and the persistence of religious movements afterwards; as well as the leftist movements that stroke Turkish politics throughout the 1960s and 1970s. These ideological concerns led military schools to increase the number of courses devoted to Kemalism, and pushed the 1980 military junta to present and disseminate Kemalism as the founding ideology of the Turkish Republic. A prominent journalist Mehmet Ali Birand, observes that while Kemalism had not been elaborated in the military academies during the 1940s, in the 1960s the number of

hours dedicated to instruction in Kemalism rose from 5 to 8-9 percent.<sup>159</sup> Military utilized Kemalism for preserving the status quo, and for preventing the spread of political extremism among the society. Especially after the 1980 military coup, a “conservative” version of Kemalism was seen as the cure for the social upheavals.

This conservative interpretation, or this orthodox interpretation, showed itself in every aspect of Turkey-EU relations, but particularly in sensitive issues that are interlinked with Kemalism. Initial response of the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) to the demands of the EU demands was harsh. The first draft of “The Measures that Turkey Needs to Take in the Light of the Copenhagen Political Criteria” report prepared by the Prime Ministry High Council for the Coordination of Human Rights Issues [Başbakanlık İnsan Hakları Koordinatör Üst Kurulu] in May 2000, which involved groundbreaking proposals such as abolishing the ban on use of languages other than Turkish in expression of thoughts and inclusion of ‘constitutional citizenship’ article to the Constitution, was harshly criticized by the NSC. In response to this report, also known as the ‘Demirok report’, the NSC issued another report, which argued that permitting broadcasting in Kurdish and teaching Kurdish would facilitate separatist movements and threaten Turkey’s national unity. Another striking assessment that the NSC did was that it would not be proper to comply with the Union’s exaggerated demands that are incompatible with Turkey’s peculiarities.<sup>160</sup> After the NSC report, the Demirok report was smoothened by excluding the abovementioned controversial elements and Gürsel Demirok who was the architect of the report was withdrawn from his post. The Domestic Security Report issued by the Office of the Chief of General Staff in December 2000 also included notable reservations regarding broadcasting in and teaching of Kurdish.

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<sup>159</sup> Mehmet Ali Birand, *Shirts of Steel* (London: I.B. Tauris&Co, 1991), 54.

<sup>160</sup> “MGK’nın dediği oldu,” *Radikal*, 23 June 2000.

After stating that during the past years some EU member states had supported PKK, the report went on to claim that the terrorist organization was exploiting the EU's demands such as recognition of sub-identities, broadcasting in Kurdish and teaching of Kurdish.<sup>161</sup>

This view persisted throughout the upper echelons of the TAF in the following years. In 2001, brigadier general Halil Şimşek—the then Commander of the Armed Forces Academy—expressed his concerns about the EU membership by saying that through the Accession Partnership, the Union was trying to divide Turkey by pushing Turkey to grant cultural rights, right to broadcast in and teaching Kurdish to its Kurdish originated citizens, who are the constituent elements of Turkey.<sup>162</sup> Similarly, one year later another high ranking military officer Tuncer Kılınç, the then Secretary-General of the National Security Council put his anti-EU views. After stating that he was expressing his personal views, not the official view of the TAF, he argued that Turkey should seek alliances with Russia, Iran and the US instead of the EU membership.<sup>163</sup> Although Kılınç highlighted that these were his personal views, declarations of an officer of his rank are bound to be treated at least as widely approved opinions in the upper echelons of the TAF.

Prioritization of nationalism and the concept of national unity can be traced in almost all declarations of high-ranking military officials. For orthodox Kemalists some international institutions and some European countries want Turkey to give up the unitary structure of the Republic and the nation-statehood by utilizing the pretense of cultural rights and freedoms, human rights and democracy. In a similar vein, members of this group regard recognition of Alevis as a religious community as

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<sup>161</sup> “Genelkurmay İç Güvenlik Yorumu,” *ntvmsnbc*, 7 December 2000.

<sup>162</sup> “Tuğgeneral Halil Şimşek: Ülkemiz Bölünmek İstenmektedir,” [www.belgenet.com/arsiv/ab/simsek\\_110101.html](http://www.belgenet.com/arsiv/ab/simsek_110101.html). Retrieved on 20 March 2005.

<sup>163</sup> “Türkiye Rusya ve İran’la İttifak Arayışında Olmalı,” *Sabah*, 8 March 2002.

a threat to the unitary nature of Turkey. Military commanders even refrain from mentioning the possibility of recognizing ethnic and sectarian minorities, and they remind that the existence of ethnic and religious differences does not necessarily constitute minorities; minority rights are individual rights and cannot be politicized by regarding them as collective rights. The then Commander of the Land Forces Atilla Ateş argues that some institutions are trying to introduce Alevi-Sunni distinction to a people who have been living together since thousands of years.<sup>164</sup> Directorate of Religious Affairs repeatedly declares that Aleviness is not a sect of Islam, it is merely a culture and a way of life within Islam and it calls Alevi people to the mosques. The same denial policy applied in the Kurdish issue prevails in the Aleviness issue, and orthodox Kemalists try to silence discussions in this issue.

They regard the TAF as the only institution that is capable of preserving the national unity of Turkey and as the only institution that ‘divisive’ forces cannot penetrate into. A speech delivered in August 2004 by the Second Chief of General Staff Yaşar Büyükanıt well explains the high-ranking military officers’ view regarding the role of the military in Turkish politics:

We observe that some internal and external powers try to marginalize the TAF from its regime guardianship role by making general statements like ‘the role of the military in Turkish politics’. No one should doubt that we would keep on shouldering our responsibilities regardless of individual concerns.<sup>165</sup>

This ‘promise’ to carry on their responsibilities is the essence of the EU’s concerns regarding the role of the military. Yet, the TAF show no sign of compromise when it comes to their guardianship role in Turkish politics.

Yet, there have been some recent declarations of top military officers such as the Chief of General Staff Hilmi Özkök and Second Chief of General Staff Yaşar

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<sup>164</sup> [www.mfa.gov.tr](http://www.mfa.gov.tr), 29 June 2000. Retrieved on 6 September 2004.

<sup>165</sup> “Reform Dedikleri Rejimi Bozuyor”.

Büyükanıt, which seem to be groundbreaking in terms of their pro-EU views and courage of recalibrating Kemalism. Yaşar Büyükanıt argues that Turkey's EU membership is a natural outcome of Atatürk's ideal of civilizationism and that the TAF give full support to the EU ideal. He also argues that Kemalism should not be seen as a dogma. He says that Atatürk did not leave behind a narrow ideological framework; what he left behind is a humanist, modern, innovationist worldview.<sup>166</sup> Likewise, Hilmi Özkök occasionally delivered similar speeches that underscore the TAF's support for the EU membership, and he even openly criticized the military coups in Turkey and promised that from now on the military would increase its trust to civilian decisions.<sup>167</sup>

However when analyzed in depth it can be observed that these declarations represent almost the same old mentality; but disguised with a pro-EU rhetoric. The external and internal pressures demanding a transformation of Turkish political system, coupled with the high levels of popular support for Turkey's EU membership urged the military to pay lip service to Turkey's EU membership. But it is still the old wine in a new bottle. This artificial attitude displays itself especially with regard to the ethnic and sectarian minority issues. A speech delivered by the then Second Chief of General Staff Yaşar Büyükanıt on 30 May 2003 is very illustrative in terms of revealing the ambivalent position of the military. After underscoring that the military could never be against the EU membership, he went on to argue that the right to broadcasting in languages other than Turkish was threatening due to the existence of thousands of terrorists within the country.

Therefore it can be safely argued that the TAF pay lip service to Turkey's EU membership by claiming to be pro-EU in rhetoric but remaining skeptical of the

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<sup>166</sup> "Atatürkçülük Dogma Değildir," *Radikal*, 28 September 2004.

<sup>167</sup> "Orgeneral Özkök'ten İhtilal Yorumu," *Sabah*, 15 September 2004.

EU's sincerity and rejecting its conditionality particularly regarding the issue of ethnic and sectarian minorities, the role of the military in politics and in general, further democratization of Turkish politics through enhanced individual rights and freedoms that would bring about a more plural society. High level of popular support for Turkey's EU membership pushes the military to pay lip service to the EU membership but by the 'Ankara criteria' instead of the 'Copenhagen criteria.' Thus the TAF preserves its mission of keeping an eye on political developments, but at the same time pretends to be pro-EU and open minded with regard to the roadmap drawn by the EU for Turkey's full compliance with the Copenhagen criteria. Each and every declaration delivered by high-ranking military officers pays tribute to democracy, the EU membership, diversity; but still ends up with the promise to 'protect the Turkish Republic and democracy from internal threats', which constitutes the crux of the problem with regard to the civil-military relations in Turkey.

TAF's genuine feelings with regard to the EU conditionality and the EU membership in general can easily be observed in the declarations of retired high ranking military officers. For example former Second Chief of the General Staff Çevik Bir offers consideration of the 'Shanghai Five' as an alternative to the EU membership.<sup>168</sup> Similarly, retired general Suat İlhan expresses his views regarding the EU membership as follows:

Those principles [The six arrows] that constitute the source of Kemalism and Kemalist system of thought will be distorted and weakened in case of Turkey's EU membership. Sharing with the EU institutions the principles of independence and national sovereignty that Atatürk infused into the cement of Turkish republic and nation, would deprive our country from these superior qualities and would render Turkey a [federal] state of the EU...It is impossible to support the EU membership without denying the validity of Kemalist

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<sup>168</sup> "Bir: AB'ye Alternatif Şangay Beşlisi," *Hürriyet*, 26 March 2002.



principles. No one can be pro-EU at the same time loyal to Kemalist principles.<sup>169</sup>

Retired commanders' declarations reflect the military's views in a more sincere manner since they do not have the obligation to satisfy the public opinion so as to maintain the TAF's prestigious role in Turkish society.

There are many other representatives of the Orthodox interpretation of Kemalism among the academicians and bureaucrats. Erol Manisalı is one of the most popular academicians who fall under the Orthodox category. Manisalı views pro-EU circles within Turkish society as the collaborators of the EU in its hidden agenda of dividing Turkey. He argues that most of the pro-EU "lobbyists" are anti-Kemalists, or at least they keep their distance from Atatürk and that they would be benefiting from weakening of Kemalism. Thus, he regards the TAF as the only institution that these powers cannot penetrate and he implies that the TAF have to continue fighting with the pro-EU lobby so as to protect Turkey's national interests.<sup>170</sup> Manisalı believes that the European states use the Kurdish problem as a pretense to delay Turkish accession, and even if Turkey grants Kurdish people cultural and political rights, or recognize their minority status; the Kurdish card would still be played by the European powers for two goals: to counter the US power among the Kurds of Northern Iraq by controlling the Kurdish population within Turkey and to weaken Turkey by a Kurdish insurgency in case Turkey shows signals of becoming a regional power.<sup>171</sup> In this line of thinking Manisalı advocates merely an economic cooperation in even terms, without Turkey's membership to the EU.

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<sup>169</sup> Suat İlhan, *Avrupa Birliği'ne Neden Hayır?* (İstanbul: Ötüken, 2002), 36 and 51. Author's translation.

<sup>170</sup> Erol Manisalı, *İçyüzü ve Perde Arkasıyla Avrupa Çıkmazı* (İstanbul: Otopsi Yayınevi, 2001), 188.

<sup>171</sup> Manisalı, *İçyüzü ve Perde Arkasıyla*, p.178.

All in all, Orthodox Kemalists are highly skeptical of the EU, its future and Turkey's position *vis-à-vis* the EU. In general terms, they all contend that the EU is trying to divide Turkey by classifying Alevis and Kurds as sectarian and ethnic minorities, and demanding cultural and political rights for these groups. They believe that the TAF have to oversee Turkish political development and the EU-Turkey relations in order to overcome these threats and preserve national and territorial integrity of Turkey. With regard to Turkey's EU membership, by and large they presume that the EU plans to exploit Turkey both economically and geographically and will never let Turkey in. Thus they suggest that Turkey should try to become a regional power by remaining as a sovereign and strong state, which can rely upon its powerful military.

#### **4.2 Neo-Kemalists: Kemalism Meets Liberalism**

The changing face of Kemalism is ably observed by Nilüfer Göle, a reputable sociologist. Göle maintains that a tolerant version of Kemalism is on its way and Turkey is currently suffering from its labor pain.<sup>172</sup> She argues that a new Kemalism has been emerging since the late 1980s, especially through flourishing of civil society. Ascendance of civil society organizations that shoulder the task of protecting and exalting Kemalism and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, especially in the shape of women's and youth organizations, gives signals of a new version of Kemalism, this time transforming the society from bottom to the top. She concedes that Turkish society is embracing Mustafa Kemal and his way of thinking, which had been strict taboos up until today, by demythologizing them: people read Atatürk's life, they wear badges of Atatürk and they start to examine his thoughts. This new

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<sup>172</sup> Interview with Nilüfer Göle, <http://www.ntv.com.tr/news/87867.asp>. Retrieved on 10 June 2005.

wave of Kemalism can be traced in social life, but not in the political scene yet. To conclude, Göle points that this “new version of tolerant Kemalism” inevitably will find its reflection in political life as well, and she contends that Kemal Derviş, who seeks to make a synthesis of modern social democracy and Kemalism is made for this mission of representing this new wave of Kemalism by drawing the thin line between orthodox Kemalism and the newly-emerging “tolerant Kemalism”.<sup>173</sup>

This emerging “tolerant Kemalism” in Göle’s words is tantamount to the neo-Kemalist school of thought. This section analyzes the basic lines of neo-Kemalist thinking regarding the Kurdish question, the Alevi question, the role of the military, and pooling of sovereignty for the sake of the EU membership; which constitute the theater of their clash with Orthodox Kemalists.

Name of a prominent journalist, Andrew Mango can be spelled out under the neo-Kemalist category. He posits that Kemalism cannot be a stagnant ideology that is not open to change, since its author was a pragmatist and rational leader, who had to deal with the problems he faced.<sup>174</sup> Thus, Mango suggests that Atatürk’s pragmatism can be utilized when handling today’s problems. His illustrative example is the Kurdish question. He contends that Atatürk’s opinions changed during and after the War of National Liberation and these changes led him to consider self-government for local customs. Mango suggests using this attitude of Atatürk for legitimizing greater freedom to use foreign languages, such as Kurdish.<sup>175</sup> Besides he responds to some assertions of Orthodox arguments with regard to the Kurdish question. Mango argues that the claim of granting cultural rights to the Kurdish community would inevitably lead to a disorder in other ethnic communities in Turkey does not make sense at all. In Mango’s words,

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<sup>173</sup> <http://www.ntv.com.tr/news/87867.asp>

<sup>174</sup> Mango, “Kemalism,” p.27..

<sup>175</sup> Mango, “Kemalism,” p. 25.

The Laz see themselves as frontiersman of Islam and defenders of the Turkish state. The urban Arabs of southern Turkey were good Ottomans under the sultans and are good Turkish citizens today... Thus it carries little force to argue that if concessions are made to Kurdish nationalism, Turkish citizens of other ethnic origins might wish to imitate the Kurds and in so doing break up the mosaic of Turkish society and destroy the Turkish state... The Kurds are a case apart, first and foremost, by reason of their number.<sup>176</sup>

What Mango prescribes for resolution of the Kurdish problem is three-phased. First one is to grant full cultural rights to the Kurds, second one is to strengthen local governments and finally to remove all barriers on the way of formation of non-violent political parties, including ethnic and regional ones. Mango goes on to conclude that the lifting of the ban on ethnic parties would end up in numerous political parties that would reflect “the deep divisions within the Kurdish society.”<sup>177</sup> It can be inferred that Andrew Mango does not regard the present policies concerning the Kurdish problem as adequate and that he urges for a revision in this policy area, which would also be in compliance with the pragmatist and reformist essence of Kemalist thinking.

Another question that is dealt by Mango is whether pooling of sovereignty and the EU membership in general are compatible with Kemalist thinking. He argues that Atatürk’s practices such as membership of the League of Nations and of the International Court of Justice in the Hague implies that he did not refrain from curbing part of the national sovereignty for the sake of the country’s welfare.<sup>178</sup>

Another representative of the neo-Kemalist group is a retired bureaucrat, former president of the Court of Cassation, Sami Selçuk. Selçuk acknowledges that Kemalism was transformed into a frozen ideology, by imposing the 1930s to the 1990s in a world that is almost being rebuilt everyday. He is also aware that the word

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<sup>176</sup> Andrew Mango, *Turkey the Challenge of a New Role* (London: Praeger, 1994), p.33.

<sup>177</sup> Mango, *Turkey*, p.50.

<sup>178</sup> Andrew Mango, “Kemalism in a New Century”, in *Turkish Transformation: New Century- New Challenges*, ed. Brian Beeley (Huntington: Eothen Press, 2002)” 27.

Atatürk occupies a central position in the Turkish society.<sup>179</sup> Thus what he advocates is abandoning the authoritarian practices that belong to the 1930s and consolidating pluralist democracy.

Selçuk observes the practices of the 1930s mostly in state-society and state-religion relations. With regard to state-religion relations he argues that compulsory religious courses threatens *laïcité*, since opening and financing schools that promote a certain religion and sect as well as incorporating a certain religion and a sect into the state organization means that the previously mentioned state has a religion and a sect.<sup>180</sup> Therefore, he takes side with the Alevi community and the EU concerning their demands of state's neutrality towards different sects of Islam. Selçuk's suggestion with regard to state-religion relations is as follows:

During the War of Independence, it is known that Atatürk and his colleagues, who were very worried about the exploitation of religion, kept it under close supervision and this was very rational behavior. However, this behavior cannot be continued in a pluralist society. Institutions and regulations need to achieve even-handedness.<sup>181</sup>

It can be inferred from some of Selçuk's general statements that he also urges the state to ease its policies towards the use of Kurdish language and the right to broadcasting in and teaching of languages other than Turkish. Selçuk argues that a pluralist democracy shall not embrace a hegemonic identity since it is bound to reject dogmas and dogmatism. He believes in the richness and potential for development that pluralism brings upon a society and he holds that each culture is entitled to receive impartial treatment by the state and law.<sup>182</sup> Thus, it can be safely argued that Selçuk regards granting cultural rights to the Kurds as an important part of democratization in Turkey.

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<sup>179</sup> Selçuk, *Longing*, 8.

<sup>180</sup> Selçuk, *Longing*, 58.

<sup>181</sup> Selçuk, *Longing*, 59.

<sup>182</sup> Selçuk, *Longing*, 30.

Although Selçuk does not make blunt comments regarding the role of the military, he concludes his words by rejecting “degenerated democracy which is permitted under the supervision of big brothers. I want the highest democracy in the sense of a government of a people made up of free individuals by the people and for the people.”<sup>183</sup> Needless to mention that the term “big brothers” stands for the TAF, and it is evident that Selçuk regards extensive role of the military in Turkish political life as contrary to the principle of national sovereignty, which is one of the fundamental components of Kemalism.

With regard to the EU membership, Selçuk holds that the EU membership is just an offshoot of consolidation of democracy in Turkey. He contends that we still lag far behind of what Atatürk dreamt of, however he is still hopeful that Turkish society can arrive at democracy in a short time and that after then Turkey will join the EU. In Selçuk’s words:

There will be a spin-off of this [democratization]: Turkey will join the European Union. All the same, the Turkish people want seamless democracy not for joining in this Union, but for its development and happiness. In this context, the codes of European Union and the consent of the Turkish people are in juxtaposition.<sup>184</sup>

In this manner, it can be inferred that Selçuk recognizes the compatibility of Kemalism with the EU membership and consolidation of pluralist democracy, despite long-drawn-out practices of Orthodox Kemalists to transform Kemalism into a rigid ideology. He wants “the return of the radiant Atatürk with the civilized face and the Kemalism which is not trapped in the 1930s.”<sup>185</sup>

Neo-Kemalist view receives backing from numerous columnists as well. Hasan Cemal is one of these journalists who articulate neo-Kemalist views in his

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<sup>183</sup> Selçuk, *Longing*, 74.

<sup>184</sup> Selçuk, *Longing*, 91.

<sup>185</sup> Selçuk, *Longing*, 74.

articles. In response to the arguments claiming that what Atatürk meant by ‘contemporary civilization’ was not necessarily Europe, he argues that Atatürk inevitably had to point at Europe as the ‘contemporary civilization’ since at that time there was no modern civilization other than Europe. He continues by reminding that “that was the reason why Atatürk adopted Commercial Law from Germany, Civil Code from Switzerland and the model of unitary and *laicist* state from France.”<sup>186</sup> In this line of thinking, he notes that the EU membership is compatible with “Atatürk’s path” and that Turkey should not turn its eyes off of the EU. Cemal also touches upon the Kurdish and the Alevi questions in his articles. He maintains that denying these identities and forbidding their reflections in social life aggravates the problems.<sup>187</sup> What he prescribes, like other neo-Kemalists, is to look through the lenses of the 21<sup>st</sup> century instead of the lenses that belong to the 1930s. He thinks that the concepts of national sovereignty, democracy and rule of law are changing in Turkey due to the EU conditionality; and that Turkey should handle its problems such as the Kurdish and the Alevi questions by developing tools and policies that correspond to this changing juncture.<sup>188</sup>

İsmet Berkan expresses parallel views in his column. He argues that Turkey has matured its democracy in years, and Turkish democracy was put to the test during the transition years to multi-party politics in the 1950s. He contends that if Turkey was not partitioned or Turkish democracy was not jeopardized by a noteworthy movement during those years, neither does it today. In this manner he concludes by saying that freedom of expressing ethnic and religious identities is not a

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<sup>186</sup> Hasan Cemal, “Atatürk Yolu Demek,” *Milliyet*, 6 July 2003.

<sup>187</sup> Hasan Cemal, “Yasakçı, Ne Oldu?,” *Milliyet*, 10 February 2005.

<sup>188</sup> Hasan Cemal, “29 Ekim: En Büyük Bayram!,” *Milliyet*, 29 October 2004.

threat for the Republic, these freedoms would only consolidate Republican regime and bolster citizens' loyalty to the state.<sup>189</sup>

In the light of these views it can be argued that a great deal of pressure for revising Kemalism is coming from various circles of Turkish society and forming a vocal neo-Kemalist group. By and large members of neo-Kemalist group view Kemalism as being capable of adaptation "without having to strain at some doctrinal leash"<sup>190</sup> and look for a more flexible interpretation of it that can have a say in today's more integrated world. They believe that most elements of Kemalism are still applicable in the present day; such as its longing for establishing democracy by taking scientific thinking as a guide, its pragmatism and reformism to achieve that. Therefore this group puts into interrogation the orthodox interpretation of Kemalism that has prevailed since the 1980s, so as to renovate the so-called Kemalist ideology to its original form, which is much milder and laxer; and this interrogation naturally starts by an examination of the nature of Kemalism.

Neo-Kemalists do not view Kemalism as a full-fledged ideology that suppresses criticism and civil society. They argue that although it was not an ideology and Atatürk was not an ideologue, the military had transformed it into a rigid ideology by ignoring its reformist and democratic aspirations. They blame orthodoxs for being stuck in the 1930s, and seeing the world through that time's perspective by disregarding Atatürk's devotion for reaching the level of contemporary civilization, democracy, human rights and pluralism, which are applicable today.

This common assertion is the point they diverge from anti-Kemalists. Although anti-Kemalists maintain that Atatürk had never been and never aimed to be

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<sup>189</sup> İsmet Berkan, "Cumhuriyet'in Değerini Bilmek ve Onu İleri Götürmek," *Radikal*, 29 October 2004.

<sup>190</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Encounters with Nationalism* (Oxford ; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1994), 91.



fully democratic; that his main purpose had been to preserve the state's strict control over the people; and that he was a social engineer planning to transform Turkish society so as to create an obedient and homogeneous nation; neo-Kemalists believe that Kemalism, in its essence, is a flexible, pragmatist and civilizationist world view that does not aim at creating an ideology which has a claim to explain everything under the sun. Thus while anti-Kemalists favor wholesale abandonment of Kemalism, neo-Kemalists advocate revision of it in accordance with the changing political juncture.

What neo-Kemalists prescribe for today is modernization as a self-propelling societal process that focuses on the individual, instead of modernization from above. Neo-Kemalists argue that it is the time to advance Kemalist reforms one step further, it is time for the people to become the subjects of modernization project instead of being its objects in the face of a changing world, in which individualism is being praised more than ever. Parallel to this, custodianship role of the military has to be downgraded gradually while Turkish society matures in time.

For neo-Kemalists, changing conjuncture pushes Turkey to pursue a more democratic, and evolutionary rather than a revolutionary path. Up until now, citizenship has been based on responsibilities of the people against the state rather than their rights and freedoms. Today it is time to reverse the picture, and recognizing the identities that have been marginalized by the state is a good start trying to that.

Neo-Kemalists view the EU membership as an extension of Kemalist thought that had set its sight on reaching the level of contemporary civilization, which is undoubtedly led by the West. They push the principles of civilizationism, reformism, populism and respect for human rights, democracy and pragmatism that

are embedded within the Kemalist thinking to the forefront, and build their new interpretation on these principles, which are also compatible with the changing conjuncture and the EU conditionality today.

## CONCLUSION

It is a fact that the prospect of the EU membership and the EU conditionality has borne great deal of influence over Turkish political system and the society. So much that almost every complaint includes the resentment about how we can join the EU without changing our mentality. Thus it is clear that Turkish society as a whole have been going through change. Kemalism also took its share from this dynamic of change and is inevitably exposed to the impacts of the EU conditionality just like other components of Turkish political system.

Since the time of its first formulation, almost every political movement claimed to be the true owner of Kemalism: Islamists tried to convince people that if Atatürk was alive he would have been a member of their party, the leader of the PKK terrorist group declared that he was sympathizing Atatürk, the list reaches even to the communists. This is due to the flexible nature of Kemalism, which can be classified as an outlook in its essence. An outlook that everybody could grab a part of and claim that the part he holds is the real core of it. Although Kemalism was formulated as an outlook based on scientific thinking, pragmatism and flexibility, 1980 military coup transformed it into a rigid ideology that was based on Kemalist nationalism and on Turkish historical and moral values, and imposed on the Turkish society and polity. This approach inevitably brought about a restrictive attitude towards the Kurdish question, the Alevi problem, enhanced the role of the TAF in Turkish political system, the issues that have constituted the core of the problems of Turkey in complying with the Copenhagen political criteria. Although the 1980 military intervention did not refrain from limiting sovereignty, advocates of the post-1980

practices—namely the orthodox Kemalists-- favor not giving up on sovereignty and not becoming a member of the EU.

However Turkey's long-drawn-out journey with the EU and the EU conditionality that is expressed in progress reports and Accession Partnership documents indicate that it is impossible to go on with the prevalent interpretation of Kemalism. Contrary to the orthodox-Kemalists, who are the owner of the present ideology, and anti-Kemalists who prefer wholesale abandonment of Kemalism and references to Atatürk, a newly emerging neo-Kemalist group that is propelled by the EU conditionality try to keep Atatürk as a reference for a long time by setting his reformism, pragmatism and goal of catching up with the contemporary civilization as its core principles, and by reestablishing it as an outlook again in order to make it compatible with the different requirements of the day. By delineating the nature of Kemalism as its devotion to science and civilizationism, and its pragmatic orientation, this group tries to deconstruct and rebuild the Kemalist ideology. In the bottom line they try to prove that the EU membership is compatible with Atatürk's goal of civilizationism and his long-term targets such as consolidated democracy and respect for human rights. Thus, for them the EU membership grows directly out of the very essence of Kemalism itself.

It is too early to announce the end of Kemalism or its failure to modernize Turkish society. Turkey has the capacity of becoming a modern state in the fullest sense due to its goal of modernization that is a century old. Kemalist thinking has somehow survived for 70 years regardless of the changing conjuncture and it owes its resilience to its flexibility and pragmatism. As Süleyman Demirel puts, "Atatürk has to be our reference even in the next century, since we have witnessed the demise

of other references such as religion or ethnicity.”<sup>191</sup> Thus, neo-Kemalists are aware of this fact and they try to revise Kemalism so as to reestablish it as an outlook based on pragmatism and civilizationism that is not strained by the idea of EU membership.

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<sup>191</sup> Ertuğrul Özkök, “Dünün Şüphesi, Bugünün Kanıtı,” *Hürriyet*, 19.07.2005.

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